THOMAS GUTHRIE

PREACHER AND PHILANTHROPIST

A Study of

HIS RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

and

HOMILETICAL METHOD

A Thesis

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by

John Lowrance Newton

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To

SCOTT and CHARLES

for

Patience and Encouragement

FOREWORD

This work is an investigation of the philanthropy, religious thought and preaching of Thomas Guthrie. It is limited in its scope by the bounds set upon it in the Subject as stated on the Title Page. The purpose of this study is to answer these questions: What was the nature of Guthrie's work in the philanthropic sphere, and in what way may it be said he was a philanthropist? What was Guthrie's religious thought? What kind of a preacher was Guthrie, what were his methods and what place did he fill as a pulpit orator in mid-nineteenth century Scotland? In endeavoring to answer the first question, no effort has been made to analyze in detail all of his activities and contributions in the field of benevolence; rather, our purpose has been to focus upon that which would demonstrate wherein and how Guthrie expressed himself as a philanthropist. As to his religious thought, Guthrie has been allowed to express himself wherever possible and practicable in his own words, and in proportion to what he said or failed to say on any particular subject. Our answer to the third question involves the various phases of his life as a preacher, a study of his pulpit preparations and delivery, and the impact of his ministrations upon his generation.

Out of sincere appreciation and gratitude for their kindly aid and generous assistance we desire to use this

place to acknowledge our indebtedness to the following friends: the Very Reverend Hugh Watt, D.D., D.Litt., professorial adviser, former Principal of New College and Dean of the Faculty of Divinity; the Reverend Professor W.S. Tindal, O.B.E., D.D., professorial adviser; the Reverend J. B. Primrose, M.A., Librarian of New College; Miss Erna R. Leslie, M.A., B.Com., Assistant-Librarian and Principal's Secretary; Mr. Charles Guthrie, W.S., Edinburgh, grandson of Thomas Guthrie; Miss Frances Guthrie, Tunbridge Wells, England, granddaughter of Thomas Guthrie; Mr. A.J. M'Allister, T.D., Headmaster of Dr. Guthrie's Schools for Boys, Liberton; the staff of the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; the staff of the British Museum, London; the librarians of the Universities of St. Andrews, Aberdeen and Glasgow. Very particularly I wish to thank Professor Tindal who, after Principal Watt became Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, with patience and liberality guided the composition of this thesis from first to last.

The spelling and punctuation throughout this work, with the exception of direct quotations which are true to the source, follow standard American usage.

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J.L.N.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

of

THOMAS GUTHRIE

"Esteemed by men of all creeds, happy in the consciousness that the good he had done would live after him, Dr. Guthrie's is a life that all may study with advantage,"

The Graphic

CHAPTER I

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

I. BRECHIN 1803-1873

Thomas Guthrie has been the subject of several biographies all of which have drawn heavily upon the Autobiography and Memoir by his sons. This opening chapter purposes only to set forth the life of Guthrie in such a succint way as to familiarize the reader with the general flow of his life and activities.

Thomas Guthrie was born in Brechin in the county of Forfar, Scotland, July 12, 1803, the twelfth child and sixth son of David and Clementina Cay Guthrie.

The ancient and royal burgh of Brechin possesses an ecclesiastical history of which few Scottish towns can boast, a subject with which Guthrie early became familiar. We are told that in the year 990, Kenneth II dedicated this "great city" as an ecclesiastical center, and that thereupon he forthwith gave it "to the Lord."[1] But long before Kenneth came upon the scene Brechin was the center of Scottish worship, the evidence of which is still to be seen in the famous Round Tower which is, in Guthrie's words, "the finest speciman extant of those round towers whose origin is lost amid

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1 J.J. Bell, The Glory of Scotland, p. 309.

the mists of an extreme antiquity."[1] Of what happened to those early pagans there is no record, but soon after Christianity entered Scotland early missionaries founded a college at Brechin "under the shadow of that beautiful tower, the graceful monument of an older and purer faith than Popery." In the year 1150 the Church of Rome entered into the life of this ancient religious place when David I made it a bishopric and heavily endowed it with lands and property upon which and close by the round tower, the old cathedral was erected. At the Reformation, however, the people of Brechin were quick to join forces with the reformers, and in so doing ushered Brechin into another phase of its long and unique religious life. "Thus, within a space more limited than is perhaps to be found anywhere else, . . . this old city of Forfarshire shows us, in Culdee, in Popish, and in Protestant objects, monuments of the successive religious faiths and forms of the country."

This rich and varied religious tradition impressed itself upon the life of young Tammy Guthrie. His mature works refer often to this part of the environment where his first years were spent. But the people from whom he sprang and who were themselves part and parcel of these old scenes played a far larger and more vital part in the life of the

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1 Guthrie, Studies of Character From the Old Testament, 2nd Series, pp. 30-31. (Hereinafter referred to as Characters),

boy who, as a man, was himself to take a prominent place in the religious life and strife of his people.

Guthrie is a proud name in Scotland; it is "a famous name in the annals of Forfarshire, and it is surprising that no genealogist of that gifted clan has yet appeared."[1] Even before Thomas came to add luster to the name, "the family was one of great respectability and considerable antiquity"[2] having been prominently connected with the town of Brechin and the county of Forfar for more than two hundred years. Lord Guthrie, youngest son of Thomas, says that the origin of the name is probably Scandinavian,[3] but the history of the family is so thoroughly connected with Scotland for so long a time that the derivation of the people who first bore it is lost in the past. For all practical purposes, the Guthries are Scotsmen to the core.

The Covenanters of the seventeenth century were a constant source of inspiration to Thomas Guthrie; and when he became deeply involved in the great issues of the Disruption of 1843, he liked to think of himself (and others of his party) as nineteenth century Covenanters ready and willing to give their all for the well-being and independence of the

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1 Robert L. Orr, Lord Guthrie: A Memoir, p. 2.

2 Edinburgh Daily Review, reprint, 1873, p. 3 (Hereinafter referred to as Daily Review).

3 Orr, op. cit., p. 2. W. Anderson, The Scottish Nation, II, 386, says the name's precise origin is unknown.

Kirk. It was for this reason that he wrote:

> To establish, what certain circumstances made highly probable, the connection of my family with those heroes of the Covenant to whom, under God--as is now all but universally admitted--Great Britain largely owes her civil and religious privileges, was an object of my ambition. I failed; yet am conscious that the idea and probability of this has had a happy influence on my public life, in determining me to contend, and suffer if need be, for the rights of Christ's crown, and the liberties of his Church.[1]

The specific connection to which he refers is that of his probable relation to the famous and revered James Guthrie of Stirling who was beheaded in 1661, and to the somewhat less known but equally able William Guthrie, minister at Fenwick and author of the well known The Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ. Although he failed in this effort--as did his son Charles John at a later date--he had the satisfaction of knowing that his ancestors, for generations Forfar farmers, were connected with the ancient family of Guthrie of Guthrie out of which came also those Covenanting heroes, James and William.[2] The first time he appeared on a platform with his intimate friend the Duke of Argyll, he recalled another occasion when a Campbell and a Guthrie occupied a platform together. "The Campbell," said Guthrie, "was the great Marquis

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1 David K. Guthrie and Charles J. Guthrie, Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie, D.D., and Memoir, Popular Edition, 1877, p. 6 (Hereinafter referred to as Memoir).

2 Orr, op. cit., p. 3. See also Dictionary of National Biography, XXIII, 380.

of Argyll; the Guthrie was James Guthrie, the martyr; and the platform was a scaffold."[1] A contemporary of William Guthrie recorded a detailed description of his character, appearance and pulpit style; an account which harmonizes in a remarkable way with the descriptions made almost two hundred years later of the subject of this paper.[2] Whether or not the blood of the Covenanting Guthries actually flowed in the veins of Thomas the fact remains that the possibility, if not the probability, of such a blood-bond made its mark upon the boy and, later, the man.

The Guthries were a hardy yoeman stock, and for generations were recognized for honesty, piety and industry. Thomas remembered his paternal grandfather, who often visited in the boy's home, with a kind of reverential awe. Although a farmer, as his forebears had been, this grandfather lived in "comfortable and rather affluent circumstances". Thomas, in later years, recorded the following recollection of this man:

> Nothing in my thoughtless boyhood ever impressed me so much as the reverence with which he approached God, even in saying grace at meals. . . When all had taken their seats, and were waiting in solemn silence, he slowly uncovered his hoary locks of the cap he wore in the house; and, slightly throwing back his head, with his open eyes raised to heaven, he implored a blessing on the meal--his voice and uplifted eyes tremulous with age, and his countenance wearing an expression of profound devotion.[3]

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1 C.J. Guthrie, Thomas Guthrie: Preacher and Philanthropist, p. 11.

2 Memoir, pp. 210-11.

3 Ibid., p. 10.

This good man was married to a woman who was as remarkable for her outspoken decision of character as her husband was for his piety. It is told that when her love-sick but bashful son could not bring himself to ask for his beloved's hand in marriage, this good woman forthwith took him to the girl's house and, within a matter of minutes, had the entire affair happily settled. Thomas admired his grandmother and remembered her as a woman of "genuine though rather stern piety." But, he averred:

> To this remarkable woman, we Guthries largely owe the decision of character and determination of purpose, of which, unless other people are mistaken, we have a more than ordinary share; a valuable inheritance certainly, especially when controlled and guided by the grace of God.[1]

David Guthrie, a son of this interesting couple and the father of Thomas, was the first of the family to find his life's work elsewhere than the farm. As a young man he apprenticed himself to a merchant of Montrose, but soon found his way to Brechin where within a short time he became the leading merchant and politician of the town. For years he was the Provost and chief political figure for that section; and, in addition, was bank agent, shipowner, distiller, trader. As a man of public responsibility, David's family looked upon him

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1 Ibid., pp. 11-12. P. Bayne, The Free Church of Scotland. Her Origin, Founders and Testimony, p. 207, says: "His [Guthrie's] habit of striking to the heart of things, and not going about them and about them in irrelevant gyrations, was quite in the style of this prevailing parent."

with pride as well as affection, for "he was a man of strong sense and Christian principle."[1] He was, indeed, "a man of sincerely religious principles, upright in business, exemplary in his family relations, a model citizen, and a staunch friend."[2]

Thomas always remembered the home of his youth with tenderest affection. His father refused to allow the press of business and the duties of public life to interfere with his own and his family's spiritual welfare. He regarded the running of his home a sacred duty worthy of his best efforts. Thomas said he was a strict disciplinarian:

> Few parents ever made less of the rod . . . yet none ever ruled more absolutely. He was far from being stern; yet a word, a look was law, not only to be obeyed, but that promptly, instantly, without an attempt at remonstrance on our part, or any reason given on his.[3]

This son quickly learned that the things pertaining to the faith were not matters to be taken lightly. His father, an elder in the Established Church, saw to it that his family took every precaution to guard well the faith, and on the Sabbath day nothing of a secular nature was allowed to occupy the time and minds of his thirteen children. "There was no

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1 J.A. Wylie, Disruption Worthies: A Memorial of 1843, p. 281.

2 Oliphant Smeaton, Thomas Guthrie ("Famous Scots Series"), p. 17. The father died when Thomas was at the University. "By the death of this parent . . . the awful realities of eternity were brought near to him . . . and he saw the power of faith in Christ in sustaining the soul . . ." Jean Watson, Life of Thomas Guthrie, D.D., p. 15.

3 Memoir, p. 26.

fun or levity," Thomas remembered, "and we would indeed almost as soon thought of profane swearing as of whistling on the Lord's day."[1] This was a strain on the naturally lively youngest son of this pious household, but it was not without appreciation that he wrote many years later:

> In these old Scotch manners there might be, and indeed was, a strictness which gave an air of severity to the observance of Sunday, but in the duties we owe either to God or man, it is even better to lean to the side of scrupulousness than laxity; and I may remark here, that Scotland and her children owe much to the manner in which they were taught to remember the Sabbath day . . .[2]

Looking back upon these childhood days Guthrie recalled that, strict though they may have been, "the Sabbath passed away like a flood that fertilizes the land it overflows, leaving a blessing behind it."[3] He hotly resented the mid-nineteenth century aspersions cast upon the manner of Scotland's observance of Sunday in the old days, and he defended it by giving an "honest and candid picture" of Sabbath-keeping in his father's home:

> Conversation about the ordinary business of life was not engaged in, nor allowed. No letters were taken from the post-office, nor any but religious books read. Nor were the newspapers looked at . . . No walk was taken but in the garden, and to the church, which we attended regularly, both forenoon and afternoon. In the evening, my father, who had the catechism . . . at his fingers' ends, as they say, used to put us through our drill in its questions and theology; and I think I see him still, in

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1 Ibid., pp. 15-16.
2 Ibid., pp. 16-17.
3 Guthrie, Sundays Abroad, p. 15.

> his knee-breeches, white woollen stockings, and white cravat--his costume both on Sunday and Saturday--tall, erect, his dark crisp hair dashed with grey, walking up and down the floor of the dining-room, as was his wont, with nine children and three women servants ranged up by the walls, each in turn having a question to answer. Besides this, the younkers had to repeat portions of the Psalms which they had committed to memory, and also texts of the day, while an elder brother . . . gave a summary of the sermons.[1]

Thomas greatly revered his mother. According to those who knew him and her best, the mother was the greatest single influence in the life of this son. At home and in public he always referred to her with profound love and admiration; and it was to her--her prayers, her Christ-like character, her devoted and selfless endeavor to bring up this lad "in the way he should go"--that Thomas felt he was most deeply indebted. Indeed, as one of the family servants said in later years, "He drank in the Gospel with his mother's milk."[2]

His mother's parents, Guthrie said, "were eminent for piety, bringing up their children in the fear of God and, as I have heard my mother tell, the very strict observance of the Sabbath."[3] Mrs. Guthrie, child of these parents, was herself a woman of considerable "force of character and deep piety. That the impact of this character was felt by her children is evi-

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1 Ibid., pp. 14-15.
2 Memoir, p. 205.
3 Ibid., p. 13. Guthrie must have intended to tell more of his maternal forebears, but the thread of his narrative was broken by telling a story and he never picked it up again. His maternal great-grandfather was a farmer; his maternal grandfather a baker and magistrate in Brechin.

dent in the words of her most noted son:

> It was at my mother's knees that I first learned to pray; that I learned to form a reverence for the Bible as the inspired word of God; that I learned to hold the sanctity of the Sabbath; that I learned the peculiarities of the Scottish religion; that I learned my regard to the principles of civil and religious liberty, which have made me hate oppression, and, whether it be a pope, or a prelate, or a patron, or an ecclesiastical demagogue, resist the oppressor.[1]

It grieved and alarmed his mother that the Established Church in Brechin had, like most Established churches of that day, become infected with Moderatism with its accompanying lack of evangelical teaching. Showing no small degree of independent decision Mrs. Guthrie joined the Burgher Secession Church, as did her eldest son and daughter. In an address before the General Assembly of the Free Church in 1863, Thomas Guthrie said, "I generally worshipped on the Sabbath evenings in the Burgher church of Brechin, and I do not think I lost anything by that."[2] Guthrie's catholicity and earnest desire for a fuller union of the Protestant churches was no doubt due in some measure to these early years in his mother's church.

His sons say that so far as anyone knows he never mentioned by word or pen just when it was he decided to make the ministry his life's work. He seems to have considered no other calling seriously. From the first his eyes were fastened

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1 Ibid., p. 205.
2 Loc. cit.

upon the prospect of becoming a minister of the Church: "so soon as he was able to determine for himself, he felt the desire of his parents that he should serve God in the Gospel to be altogether coincident with his own inclination . . ."[1] Every pious Scottish home longed to have at least one son in the ministry, and the Guthries, from the first, felt that they would like for "Tammy" to be their representative in this sacred office. They had an extraordinary fondness for ministers, and never missed an occasion for having them in their home,[2] a fact which must have impressed the youthful mind of Thomas. But back of it all and through it all was his mother, that "excellent lady," at whose knees he came to learn to love all those things that meant most to him through all the years of his life.

Guthrie never had an "experience" of conversion--he could never remember when he was not a Christian. He seems to have told no one nor left any record of his own private, inner struggles. Indeed, it is doubtful that his faith ever came to him by wrestling, or that it was ever a struggle at all. We have no more to guide us in this than the evidence given by the servant, "He drank in the Gospel with his mother's milk," which he seems to have had as little difficulty

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1 Ibid., p. 220.
2 Ibid., p. 209. "The sainted Robert Coutts" lived with them his first six months in Brechin. Thomas Guthrie wrote the "Memoir" for Coutts' Sermons published in 1847.

digesting. His sons say that little is known of his inner life, "that no singular or startling circumstances" attended his conversion, "nor did he ever indicate what special instrumentality the Spirit of God employed in leading him to a choice for Christ."[1] It might be significant, even autobiographical, that in one of his sermons he says that many people can point with precision to all the details of their conversion. But, he says:

> It is not so with all, or perhaps with most. Unconscious of the change when it began, they knew not when or how it happened. And thus, with many, the dawn of grace resembles, in more respects than one, the dawn of day. It is with the spiritual dawn of many, with the breaking of their eternal day, with their first emotions of desire and of alarm, as with that faint and feeble streak which brightened, and widened, and spread, till it blazed into a brilliant sky.[2]

In his Autobiography Guthrie says on three different occasions, that his youth was "that thoughtless age," that his was "a thoughtless boyhood," and that he was a "thoughtless boy." The impression is that he hardly ever had a serious thought! On the other hand, one of his mother's domestics remembered him as a "real ready-witted, sympatheesin' kind o' a laddie." Being a lad who had "inherited an excellent constitution and a flow of animal spirits that found vent in many a stand-up fight, in swimming, and other athletic

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1 Ibid., p. 219.
2 Thomas Guthrie, The Gospel in Ezekiel, p. 267. (Hereinafter referred to as Ezekiel).

exercises," it would seem that Thomas was a vigorous, healthy and normal boy in every way--and certain it is that the two main aspects of his boyhood (and not a little in his manhood) were those of "fun and fighting." Wit and humor combined with an innate sense of the right were always marked traits of character, both in the boy and in the man; and these, together with his steadfast principles, carried him through many a battle at school and, later, on the platform--for the most part victoriously but never with bitterness.

> All his life he had a keen eye for the humorous in an individual, in a situation, in an argument; and this enabled him to compel the attention of audiences little in sympathy with his religious views. As to fighting, a sweeter-tempered man never lived; but to the last, I have seen how a story of injured innocence would make his eyes flash, and his fists clinch, and his face flush, as in the days when he thrashed a bully in the Brechin playground.[1]

There seems to have been nothing unusual or particularly important about his Brechin school days; his career was not exceptional save, perhaps, his outstanding success as a fighter. Of this achievement he said:

> While I aspired to keep the top of my class, my greatest ambition was to win honours in another field--to be the best fighter among boys of my standing. I undertook to fight any boy of my size and age with my left hand tied behind my back, and repeatedly fought boys older and bigger than myself. . . It was not a commendable ambition.[2]

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1 C.J. Guthrie, op. cit., p. 11.
2 Memoir, p. 30.

All of his life Guthrie was interested in the field of secondary education, but he never felt that any school could take the place of the home in training children. Said he:

> The best part of education is not learned at school; it is not found in books; it does not lie in Latin, Greek, or Philosophy; it is not communicated by teachers. The best education a child gets is at home, or should get it; the best teacher is a parent; and the best lesson a parent can teach his child . . . is to take his children one by one, and break the backbone of their self-will. That is what makes a happy home.[1]

That was probably his own childhood experience. In addition to the discipline, he became thoroughly versed in the historical aspects of the Scriptures "with all the stirring incidents, and marvellous miracles, and bloody battles" portrayed there. But apart from the Bible, "almost the only book we possessed interesting to young minds was the Pilgrim's Progress."

His "formal" education began at the tender age of four years when he was sent to a school operated by an elder of the Burgher Secession church. The curriculum consisted of learning the alphabet and memory work in the catechisms and the book of Proverbs ("a custom," he says, "which never should have been abandoned"). Of his teacher Guthrie said: "I remember how impressed I was with the prayers this old man offered up . . . I have never heard anything like them . . ."[2]

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1 Guthrie, What Wilt Thou Have Me Do?, p. 13.
2 Memoir, p. 23.

Together with children of other well established Brechin families, Thomas attended three other privately taught schools where he was instructed in the usual subjects including Latin, Greek, French, mathematics, algebra, Euclid and "the more common branches of education." The last summer before entering the University he spent with the minister and dominie at Dun where, he said, "I spent a happy summer preparing for college. No wonder! I was healthy, full of good spirits, and had in Mr. Simpson the kindest of guardians and tutors."[1]

II. EDINBURGH AND PARIS 1815-1830

Like his close and eminent friend Thomas Chalmers, Thomas Guthrie was only twelve years of age when he entered upon his University training in Edinburgh. If he was particularly inspired by any of his professors as he made his way through the arts and sciences at this impressionable age, he has left no record of the fact. Nor could a lad in his early teens be expected to thrill much in grappling with the subtleties and intricacies of metaphysical and techinal subjects better fitted for far older and more experienced scholars. Though "the strength of the Scottish university lay in the personality of their professors,"[2] even the most personable

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1 Ibid., p. 36.
2 J.G. Kerr, A Scotman's Heritage, p. 77.

of teachers would have had a strenuous assignment making a scholar of this vigorous child so fond of fun and fighting. On more than one occasion he fell into the hands of the college porters or policemen for fighting older students who belittled him for his age and Brechin accent. His own summary of his University accomplishments was: "Beyond the departments of fun and fighting, I was no way distinguished at college." But an associate of these days recalled:

> He was a great favourite. His exceeding naturalness, his social and overflowing kindness, his laughing eye, his ready wit, gave distinct augury to the intelligent observer of the kind of man he would become in after years.[1]

Though no scholar in the strict sense of the term, Guthrie was always a diligent and faithful student. His college notebooks and papers give ample evidence of the laborious care and consistency with which his work was carried on in Edinburgh; and whether in regular session or on holiday, as was his habit even as a minister, he rose at six o'clock for the extra and fresh hours they provided for his books. A few years later (1827) while studying at the Sorbonne, Paris, he mentions "the bell of the Carmelite convent which had so often, and so early, rung me to my books." To this he adds:

> Morning and evening I work. Instead of sitting up late at night, I now labour in the morning, as less injurious to health . . . I go to bed about twelve . . . In the

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1 Memoir, p. 213.

> morning, I light my candle, and read and write in my bed, until I can do so by the daylight. I determine not to sleep above six hours--in fact, I frequently have not above five.[1]

Thomas' University training was no superficial appendix to his life's career. He gave himself earnestly to his work for a total of eleven years--four years in Arts, four years in Divinity, two post-graduate years and, finally, one year at the Sorbonne in Paris. In his Arts course he studied Latin, Greek and Logic (which, as a thirteen year old, he decided was "a farrago of nonsense"); then Mathematics, Moral Philosophy and Natural Philosophy in all of which he "made a reputable appearance, but nothing more." His Arts course was finished before his sixteenth year and his theological training two years before the age required to be licenced as a ministerial probationer. These two years he used, to quote him, as an "opportunity of studying subjects beyond the requirements of Church law and the usual course of ministers," a course (much to his liking) in chemistry, anatomy and natural history. Said he of this two year period:

> I lost the metaphysics, but gained the physics; and, perhaps, so far as common sense, power of conversation, knowledge of the world, and power of popular address on the platform and in the pulpit, were concerned, that was a good bargain.[2]

But he always regretted having spent his college years at such

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1 Ibid., p. 234.
2 Ibid., p. 43.

an extremely youthful age. This was an evil, he said, for as a boy he was unable to appreciate some of the more cultural advantages offered by the University. Later, as with most people, he realized this: "I do not depreciate classical learning. I know little of it; but that is not my boast, but my regret; and, had I time, I would even yet begin my classes anew."[1]

Of his divinity training he says no more than that he spent four years as a student of theology. His home Calvinistic training probably found little encouragement, for it has been said that it was not until Thomas Chalmers became an Edinburgh professor in 1828 that "the cause of Moderatism was lost"[2] in that seat of learning. With the Faculty of Divinity "in a singularly inefficient state,"[3] and the University as a whole not of the highest moral tone,[4] Thomas was fortunate that his spiritual foundations had been so carefully laid in his Brechin home. His landlady remembered that he and his brother never failed, no matter how late the hour, to have family worship in their room. So far as is known, Thomas Guthrie never experienced a "crisis" in his religious life.

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1 Ibid., p. 217.
2 Norman L. Walker, Scottish Church History, p. 134.
3 Daily Review, p. 3.
4 Memoir, p. 573. "When I was a student," were Guthrie's words, "there was not, so far as I knew, one abstaining student within the University, nor was there an abstaining minister in the whole Church of Scotland."

That he had an intimate knowledge of the English Bible there can be no doubt, but he was no systematic theologian in any sense of the term and probably took this part of his training as a rather bitter dose necessary to his calling. "For theology itself, as a science, he had no special talent or taste . . ., and neither had he in after life any relish for critical works in Biblical exegesis or folios of systematic theology."[1] If one thing more than another gained his interest and efforts it was the art of sermon delivery, for it was here that he endeavored to "acquire as perfect a manner of delivery as was possible to him." According to one authority this was the beginning of his pulpit eminence, it being singularly fortunate that his oratorical style began to take shape at such an early age; otherwise, this observer says:

> If he had deferred his lessons in elocution till he had begun to preach he would have become stilted, self-conscious, and unnatural. But taking them just then, they passed into and became part of himself, so that he acted upon them unconsciously, and as it were automatically, and he thought no more about them when he was in the act of speaking than a practical writer does about spelling when he is in the heat of composition.[2]

He paid close attention to "the wonderful galaxy of talent in the Church," and the courts of law provided an equally inspiring demonstration of the orator's trade to which the aspiring youth gave critical attention: "I spent many an hour listen-

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1 Ibid., p. 217.

2 William M. Taylor, The Scottish Pulpit from the Reformation to the Present Day, p. 260.

ing with admiration to the forensic displays of John Clerk, Jeffrey, Moncrieff, Cranston, Cockburn, and other such men."[1]

Having completed ten years of University work, and having been licenced to preach by the Presbytery of Brechin, Guthrie was disappointed and not a little discouraged that, due to Moderate opposition, he was unable to secure a parish of his own. Determined that this indefinite delay should not be without its compensations he spent an academic year (1826-1827) at the University of Paris in order, as he expressed it, "to enlarge my knowledge, improve my mind, and pursue those studies in anatomy and the natural sciences, such as chemistry and natural history." These courses appealed to his taste and he diligently applied himself, as we have noticed, to his work stimulated by renowned professors: Gay-Lussac in natural philosophy; Say ("the celebrated political economist, who received me in his house very graciously"), Thenard ("the father of French chemistry"), St. Hilaire ("a very distinguished man . . . and one of the best and greatest men whom I have had the honour and happiness to know"), Lisfranc ("a great surgeon but a very rough bear") and Dupuytren ("the celebrated surgeon").[2] These all helped to gratify his thirst for information and the knowledge he gained there found its

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1 Memoir, p. 166.

2 Ibid., pp. 74-5. Professor St. Hilaire wrote a biography of Guthrie in French which was published and widely circulated in France.

way into his sermons, especially by illustrations, and even into the practical side of his pastoral work. In France, however, he was appalled, as his "Paris Journal" shows, with the immorality and "corrupting influences of Popery," which he felt went hand in hand. "I shall conclude this subject by remarking," he said by way of summary, "that I neither like French weather nor French ways, French men nor French manners." He saw no hope for the land of Calvin's birth short of a new and vigorous Reformation:

> We must have such men as Chalmers, or Thomson, or Gordon--men not only sound in principle, but giants in intellect; none of your milk-and-water, commonplace, old-wife, drivelling fellows, who were fitted by nature to weave no web but an Osnaburg, to figure on no board but a tailor's; but men who, animated with divine enthusiasm, can grapple, by their talents, with the champions of infidelity, and rouse, by their stirring eloquence, the latent passions of the soul.[1]

Was the student giving a picture of his own aspirations as a pulpit orator?--the man who was to take his own place as a combatant and a crusader? Look at this bristling reaction after having witnessed a "proud Archbishop" in a ceremony:

> I almost felt that I could, like another Melville, sieze the trappings of Popery and curse them before his eyes; or, like more than another Melville, hurl the mitre from his head and trample it beneath my feet.[2]

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1 Ibid., p. 246.

2 Ibid., p. 232. From these days onward, Guthrie always looked upon the Church of Rome as the greatest menace in the world. His book Sundays Abroad, written after retirement, has many references to that Church as the Scarlet Woman, the Anti-Christ, etc., whose early doom he passionately hoped for.

III. ARBIRLOT 1830-1837

When Guthrie was licenced to preach February 2, 1825, the Established Church's system for settling its ministers in a parish was known as "patronage"; that is, the laird or nobleman within whose property a parish was located possessed the right of recommending to the Crown a minister to fill the vacant church. These patrons, as they were called, usually followed the suggestions of the Church leaders in these matters. Because of his prominent family connections such a method of appointment would have posed no difficulties for Guthrie had he been willing to allow himself to be identified with the Church's Moderate party which then dominated his Presbytery. This he indignantly refused to do.[1] As a result several churches were refused him, one of them being "one of the largest charges and best livings of Scotland." The Moderates thereby enlisted for the opposition Evangelical party an antagonist whose withering attacks upon them in the future were to prove to be formidable. In Paris, still smarting from their arbitrary refusal to allow him a church, he wrote to his sister that he entertained . . .

. . . the bright hope that the power of Moderation

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1 P. Bayne, op. cit., p. 209: "A sure proof of constitutional soundness of character! The case was evidently one in which a young man with any super-subtlety in him, any lurking selfishness, any sneakish trick of self-deception, might have sophisticated himself into accepting the benefice."

> would one day be crushed into ruins. I owe the faction some thanks on my own account; but, if I ever get a church, I will give proof, by unceasing day and night opposition to their plans and projects, that I owe them more on the part of the public. I never was a Moderate, but they will now find me far less so. Since I left home, and mixed in the world, my aversion to every kind either of civil or ecclesiastical tyrrany has fixed down into a deep and fierce principle of hatred. I see every day in France the foul effects of absolute power, and I have learned to hate even the very semblance of it.[1]

Thus five years (1825-30) passed before he was able to penetrate the obstructions which kept him away from the active ministry. But they were neither idle nor unprofitable years: the boy became the man. In addition to his scientific studies in Edinburgh and Paris, he unexpectedly found himself interim manager of the bank of Brechin, a position left vacant by the sudden death of a brother. He spent two years in this work, and when he left it the general manager of the system with which he had been associated told him: "If you only preach as well as you have banked, you will be sure to succeed."

When the parish of Arbirlot, a small rural village beautifully situated less than three miles from the coastal town of Arbroath, became vacant, Fox Maule, M.P., afterwards Lord Panmure, a close friend of the Guthrie family, immediately recommended to the Crown that Thomas Guthrie be appointed to the charge. On May 13, 1830, twenty-seven year old

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1 Memoir, p. 224.

Thomas Guthrie was ordained to his first charge. In October of the same year he married Anne Burns of Brechin, daughter of the parish minister, to whom he had been engaged for four years. Anne was from a "Levitical" family, as her sons expressed it. Her father's three brothers were ministers: William of Kilsyth (father of William C., a missionary to China, and of Islay, a professor in Free Church College, Glasgow), Robert, a professor in Knox College, Toronto (father of Robert, a minister in Montreal), and George of Corstorphine. Her maternal cousins were Professor David Brown, D.D., Aberdeen, Charles J. Brown, D.D., Edinburgh, and Professor William Chalmers, D.D., London. Anne seems to have been a quiet, retiring and pleasant person who devoted herself to caring for her very active husband and children. When she died in 1899, at the age of 89, the Westminster Gazette wrote of her:

> Of marked individuality, gentle in manner and placid in disposition, Mrs. Guthrie usefully balanced the eager, enthusiastic nature of her husband, whom she survived for 26 years. She was strongly attached to old ways and old views, but was always ready to help any scheme that was likely to do good to others.[1]

Guthrie was happy in his first parish from the start, and in his many writings there are many beautiful pictures of the people and country where he spent his first ministerial years. But he lost no time in getting down to work. In speak-

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1 Quoted by C.J. Guthrie in the "Memoir of Thomas Guthrie", Guthrie, The Parables of Our Lord (hereinafter referred to as Parables), p. xi.

ing of these years, Smeaton, whose father was Guthrie's good friend, says that Guthrie's disappointment in failing to secure a church for so many years was his best teacher, so that when he went to Arbirlot "he threw himself into parochial work with an energy and concentration of purpose that astonished and delighted all," for "he loved work for its own sake . . . He was too apt to take a Nasmyth hammer to crack a nut, in place of apportioning the degree of effort to the importance of the end."[1]

His predecessor employed two Sunday services separated by only thirty minutes--both together lasting for over three hours. The new minister decided that one two-hour service would benefit both him and his congregation. "It is apt to happen," he said, "with two discourses on two different subjects discharged close to each other, as with the two balls of boys' tow-guns, the one drives out the other." As for himself, he had to prepare but one sermon upon which he could devote twice the time.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that the youthful minister was thereby endeavoring to ease his own burden. Upon going to Arbirlot he had resolved to enlist the interest of the youth in the Church. With this purpose in mind he instituted a Sunday evening youth fellowship for young men

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1 O. Smeaton, op. cit., pp. 31-2.

and women between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five which proved to be an immediate success. This was, as he said, "an invention of my own"; and it not only captured the interest of the youth, but the whole parish found it to be a source of inspiration. As one of his office-bearers related:

> We had a Sabbath class every Sabbath afternoon, and even in the afternoon ye would na hae gotten a seat i' the body o' the kirk, she was that fu'; and he used to make grown-up folk recite questions and hymns, and then he would ha' ta'en up the subject, and lectured for a quarter of an hour just even on; and eh! sirs, he made it sae interestin' and attractive![1]

He determined that the Gospel as it came from his lips would, so far as it in him lay, be "interestin' and attractive." Two things were stressed in this youth class: the Larger Catechism was clearly explained "and abundantly illustrated by example and anecdotes," and an examination of the morning's sermon was conducted "head by head, introduction and peroration," and clarified by "illustrations drawn from nature, the world, history, etc., of a kind that greatly interested the people, but such as would not always have suited the dignity and gravity of the pulpit."[2] Guthrie here learned the power of illustrations which he thereafter used to the utmost. In the words of his friend Professor Blaikie:

> Dr. Guthrie determined that whatever he might fail in, he would compel his hearers to attend. Watching, in the course of his first efforts, to discover what part of his

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1 Memoir, p. 276.
2 Ibid., p. 126.

> discourses seemed to be most attended to, he saw that it was the illustrations. He accordingly resolved to cultivate that department with peculiar care. Cultivate it he did, and to the greatest purpose . . .[1]

But Thomas Guthrie the preacher did not over-shadow Guthrie the pastor; indeed, it was from a loving, understanding and sympathetic heart cultivated by pastoral work during the week, that his sermons issued on the Sabbath. He was to be seen in Arbirlot . . .

> . . . mingling freely with his people, studying their characters, reading their hearts, and sympathising with many of their humours. There was much in his own character that enabled him exquisitely to enter into the feelings of the humblest of his countrymen, to understand their ways, and either to commend or reprove them with great effect.[2]

A few years after leaving this parish, Guthrie received a letter from a former parishioner the opening lines of which are as follows:

> I have just sat down . . . to write a few lines to my never-to-be-forgotten friend and pastor . . . Ah! dear sir, you little know the rememrance [sic.] of our "Dear Thomas", as you are famillarly called among your warm-hearted friends in Arbirlot . . .[3]

It was here that his first efforts in the cause of temperance found their outlet. Total abstinance was a thing practically unheard of in Scotland at this time; nor was Guthrie himself an abstainer. But from the beginning he was a strong advocate of temperance. When one of the villagers lost

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1 William Garden Blaikie, For the Work of the Ministry: A Manual of Homiletical and Pastoral Theology, pp. 59-60.

2 J. Dodds, Personal Reminiscences and Biographical Sketches, pp. 112-13.

3 Memoir, p. 271.

his life in a tragic accident directly attributed to drunkenness, the young preacher delivered a sermon the next Sunday from Joel 1:5, "Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, ye drinkers of wine." When this sermon was delivered there were two "publics" in the village, and "he got them putten doon." Successful in this, he then persuaded the property owners to agree to refuse renting to anyone for the purpose of selling alcohol. Drink had enlisted a relentless opponent.

He also addressed himself to the more positive work of lifting the general cultural and financial standing of his people. This he did by establishing a lending-library and a savings-bank, both of which, with the aid of his wife, he managed personally. The library was kept in the manse where books were distributed every Saturday. President McCosh of Princeton Seminary, formerly of Arbroath, tells of a Saturday:

> He had a pleasant word to everybody. The parish patriarchs came in, not only to return their book, but to have a talk with him. He asked especially for the man's wife, always giving her a name, . . . and got the whole details of the man's family and farm. The shy boy and the blushing maiden approached him with considerable awe, but felt assured when he named them and asked about their parents, and they went away with the ineradicable conviction that their minister loved them. He had too shrewd a knowledge of human nature to think of examining them on the books they took out; but he encouraged them to talk of the contents of the volume, and he noticed what books and parts of books they liked best, and turned the whole to their good, as helping him to learn how to preach.[1]

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1 Ibid., p. 268.

The Rev. Henry Duncan is credited with being the founder of savings-banks in 1810, and it was probably through him, as well as through his own experience in the Brechin bank, that Guthrie came to value this form of systematic thrift.[1] Before this time, according to Duncan's biographer, "a stocking, a chink in the wall, or a loose board in the floor were the only way of keeping surplus money for the lower classes."[2] Guthrie decided his parishioners should fare better than that, and so he started a savings-bank of his own for their use. When he left Arbirlot, he said, the bank had deposits of "some six hundred pounds, where the working classes, to whom almost the whole deposits belonged, might not otherwise have saved six hundred pence."

It was not long before his growing reputation began to be noised abroad. Edinburgh's leading Evangelicals saw in him a young man of promising ability. In addition to his good work as a preacher and a pastor, this wider attention was due to the conspicuous part he played in the affairs of Presbytery--to his effective platform battles with the advocates of Voluntaryism, to his pleading for Church Extension and to his unremiting fight against patronage. President McCosh, one of his co-presbyters, gives an enlightening account of Guthrie's

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1 Dictionary of National Biography, XVI, 165.
2 Henry F. Henderson, Religion in Scotland: Its Influence on National Life and Character, pp. 179-80.

standing among his brethren:

> I soon discovered that the most remarkable man among the brethren, indeed, the most notable man in the district was Thomas Guthrie, then thirty-two years of age . . . The minister of Arbirlot was palpably the master-spirit of the Presbytery, and in the social gatherings of the clergy. Though not specially, like Cunningham and Candlish, an ecclesiastical lawyer, he was well acquainted with the history and principles of the Church; and the resolutions that he tabled at the Presbytery were always distinguished by much practical sagacity, and advocated without bitterness. We younger men made him our leader; and he led us very pleasantly . . . It will be acknowledged that in that eastern coast of Mid-Scotland he was the first to raise that popular wave which carried us on to the Disruption, and through it.[1]

His threat as a student in Paris to wage unceasing warfare against Moderatism was begun in Arbirlot and consummated at the Disruption. "We are the most stirring Presbytery on the east coast of Scotland," he said with evident satisfaction in a letter.[2] His Presbytery, he continues, is the "very first in the Church to petition against Patronage," and though they may get a "licking" in the Assembly, "for that I don't care a straw provided they do not make our proceedings null and void. And if they do they will more resemble assemblies that have been than assemblies that shall be." It was he who proposed the above mentioned petition. Unlike many Evangelicals, including Chalmers, he believed that, instead of compromising, patronage should be abolished "root and branch."[3]

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1 Memoir, pp. 282-84.
2 MS letter to Rev. James Burns, May 6, 1834, in possession of his grandson Charles Guthrie, Edinburgh.
3 Memoir, pp. 141, 279, 284.

Guthrie never had any sympathy with the Voluntary movement which insisted on the separation of Church and State, and could well have joined wholeheartedly in Cromwell's remark that "If any whoseever think the interest of Christians and the interests of the nation inconsistent or two different things, I wish my soul may never enter into their secret."[1] It grieved him deeply when the time came when he found that the Church could no longer remain in partnership with the State and keep her spiritual independence; and though he was to learn much of what a non-established Church could do without the blessings of the State, he nevertheless continued to hold that the ideal would be for the two to work together, each respecting the inherent rights of the other. In the meantime, while at Arbirlot, he battled Voluntaryism's chiefest advocates, and made "educational" speeches to the people wherever he found opportunity.

The debates and platform performances involved in his tilts with Patronage and Voluntaryism brought invitations to speak on these subjects in places as far away as Edinburgh. These he declined as he did also representations to consider other pulpits. However, when certain parties in Edinburgh's Old Greyfriars Church insisted that he allow his name to be considered with a view to calling him to that church, he con-

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1 John Buchan and Geo. Adam Smith, The Kirk in Scotland, p. 81.

sented to do so with sincere misgivings. It was, therefore, because of his "Evangelical preaching, pastoral zeal, and strenuous opposition both to voluntaryism and to patronage"[1] that "the Town Council conferred on the minister of Arbirlot the greatest compliment, as it was then considered, to a country minister, by electing him to the vacant Edinburgh charge"[2] of Old Greyfriars. At first he flatly refused to consider the appointment, being, as he said, "happy and useful at Arbirlot (with) no wish to leave it. Besides refusing to preach," he says before accepting the charge, "I used every lawful means of getting my name dropped."[3] When the importunity of his well-wishers would not be denied, he said:

> Though I foresee that in leaving Arbirlot I am to lacerate my feelings, yet I am now satisfied that it is my duty to accept the appointment to Edinburgh, and in doing so, to take up my cross and follow Him to whose service I desire entirely to devote myself.[4]

Were the people of his first parish ill-pleased when he left them? Says one of them: "Ill-pleased, ca' ye it? Ill-pleased! I tell ye they were greetin', they were a' greetin'!"

IV. EDINBURGH 1837-1873

Edinburgh, the "Athens of the North," has long been

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1 Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, V, 101.
2 Daily Review, p. 5.
3 Memoir, p. 144.
4 Ibid., p. 297.

noted for its picturesque beauty and cultural advantages. In poetry and in song her templed crags, variated architecture and absorbing history as the ancient capital seat of the Scots, have been proclaimed abroad. Though he knew that he was to "lacerate his feelings" upon leaving rural Arbirlot, Thomas Guthrie looked foward to numbering himself with the one hundred and thirty thousand souls resident in Edinburgh in 1837. "Give me the city," he exclaimed years later, . . .

> . . . with Christian neighbors at my door, and daily intercourse with genial and congenial spirits. If I fall, I have them there that will help me up; if I flag, Ihave them there that will help me on. Manifold as are their evils, their temptations, and their snares, it is only in cities that piety enjoys the full benefit of the truth "As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the face of man his friend."[1]

The superficial observer might see in the Scot's metropolis only its unique beauty, But Guthrie cast his lot with that city knowing well that below the surface there was that which was less than beautiful. To a friend he wrote:

> It is all very well for men who see nothing but our noble castle, our spires and towers and palaces, to expatiate on the beauties of Edinburgh. They see but the whitewashing and ornaments of the sepulchre; if they would come with me to the Cowgate, or the College Wynd, or the Bow, I would let them see as much of the rottenness within as would break the charm.[2]

Upon his induction on September 21, 1837, as collegiate minister at Old Greyfriars, he went to work with his ac-

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1 Guthrie, The City, Its Sins and Sorrows, pp. 11-12.
2 Memoir, p. 310.

customed enthusiasm. But it was not without some trepidation that he laid hold of his new and greater work:

> I had made up my mind if I should not succeed in filling an Edinburgh pulpit and an Edinburgh church, to take ship with my wife and family for America or some of our colonies.[1]

But his doubts soon vanished as he quickly took his place among Edinburgh's more prominent preachers.[2] After his first Greyfriars service he wrote to his brother:

> The people were uncommonly still and attentive, and I have reason to believe I preached to their acceptance. Had this not been the case, I learn that . . . the Moderates of the Kirk-Session were so angry at my appointment that they would have tried the Veto. . . I am wonderfully thankful that we have made such a good beginning, and that I have neither disgraced myself, my friends, nor the men who supported me here.[3]

Nevertheless, public acclaim or not, his heart lay with the degraded population inhabiting the tenements surrounding his historic church, and he welcomed the work which his church had been carrying on in their midst in the old Magdalene Chapel. He was greatly pleased with the response he

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1 Ibid., p. 146. Two years before (1835) he had written to Rev. J. Burns: "America holds out so many good and useful places. . . I often think it possible that I may yet transfer myself to some charge in the New World. I am not joking." MS letter in possession of C. Guthrie, Edinburgh.

2 Chalmers, Gordon, Grey, Candlish, James Buchanan, Cunningham, Begg, Welsh, William Muir, John Bruce, Charles Brown, and others.

3 Memoir, pp. 304-305. J. Dodds, op. cit., p. 113, recalls: "The writer of these lines well remembers the sensation the new preacher speedily created by his vivid popular eloquence . . . and personally felt the power of the extraordinary man who had come to fill Greyfriars pulpit."

received from the poor in this chapel work, and it was the usual thing for the chapel to be filled to capacity--but with not the poor only. "It delighted me," he once observed, "to see a street beggar, to whom I, as well as others, had often given charity, decently attired, and sitting side by side with the wealthy at the table of our common Lord."[1]

It was upon the sole condition and express understanding that he would soon have a church of his own, carved out of the too-large parish of Greyfriars and composed of the very poor of that over-crowded area, that Guthrie consented to go to Edinburgh at all. These wretched people were his daily portion during the week, and he was deeply and irrevocably moved by the miserable scenes just beyond the walls of Greyfriars' hallowed churchyard with all its martyred saints and famous names. It was not a beautiful parish. In times past these tall lands (tenements) were the gay homes of the high and mighty, peopled with lords and ladies, divines and lawyers. But these moved to the New Town leaving a vacumn into which was swept the outcast who was to become Guthrie's parishioner. R.L. Stevenson pictures it thus:

> In one house, perhaps, two score families herd together; and, perhaps, not one of them is wholly out of the reach of want. The great hotel is given over to discomfort from the foundations to the chimney-tops; everywhere

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1 Ibid., p. 308. In Out of Harness, pp. 144-48, Guthrie tells the history of this old (1553) former Roman Catholic sanctuary.

> a pinching, narrow habit, scanty meals, and an air of sluttishness and dirt. In the first room there is a birth, in another a death, in a third a sordid drinking-bout, and the detective and the Bible-reader cross upon the stairs. High words are audible from dwelling to dwelling, and children have a strange experience from the first; only a robust soul, you would think, could grow up in such conditions without hurt.[1]

To meet the needs of these people who were without the services and influence of the Church, the Church of Scotland launched the Church Extension scheme. From the first, Guthrie was a vigorous supporter of the plan. While at Arbirlot he "addressed meeting after meeting on its behalf," and "aided in the erection of several Extension churches there." But it was not until he went to Edinburgh that he was thoroughly stirred within. His enthusiasm for this work never dwindled, and toward the end of his life he appealed to all Protestant denominations to evidence their essential Christian unity by coming together to "map out the dark and destitute districts" in order to meet a crying need that faced them all equally.

The Church's practice of selling pew-rents Guthrie felt to be fundamentally wrong. The Church, he contended, should sweep away the "price tag" which tended to exclude the very poor. His pastoral work provided him with an illustration:

> In passing up and down the Cowgate, I have observed a public well, were all comers, old and young, the richer and the poorer, draw water without distinction, without money and without price. . . How often have I wished that

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1 Robert Louis Stevenson, Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes, Skerryvore Edition, XXVI, 15.

> the parish church was more like the parish well, a well of salvation where all might draw water and drink.[1]

The answer to this vexing problem, he was convinced, could be found only in a return to the old parochial system, for he believed that "what it had done for Scotland in other days it could do again!" Such a system, he explained, is one . . .

> . . . where a minister should have a parish manageable in point of population; where a church, with free sittings, should be open to the parishioners; and where the whole machinery of the system being set up, it should be vigorously wrought by a full staff of elders and deacons.[2]

St. John's Parish Church was built to try again the old parochial system in the midst of the unhappy dwellers of the Old Town's darksome Nether Bow,[3] an "honour reserved for Mr. Guthrie, of course eminently qualified for the task . . . The event formed an important era in the history of the Church of Scotland."[4] The six hundred and fifty seats of the main auditorium were allotted rent free to the parishioners, while the balcony pews were let to those who were willing to rent them at discouragingly high rentals. All seatings were taken almost at once. For three years (1840-1843) Guthrie labored at St. John's with mounting success, and gave full proof that

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1 Memoir, p. 307.
2 Ibid., p. 150.
3 Now Victoria Street. The pilgrim who wishes to see the scene where rich and poor alike jockeyed for standing room to hear Guthrie will be disappointed to see that the church building is now a chemist's wholesale warehouse.
4 The Witness, November 21, 1840. Work began in 1838; the Lord Provost laid the corner stone in 1839; Guthrie held his first service there November 19, 1840.

his parochial ideas and hopes were sound and that his endeavors were amptly rewarded.

In the meantime he had refused to discuss with the Regent Square Church, London, an invitation to remove to that church, and resisted the persuasions of his friend Alexander Duff inviting him to share in the work of India missions. A letter to Lord Medwyn, who seemed to be upset by rumors of his leaving, made it clear where he thought his real work lay. He went to Edinburgh, he wrote, with "the view of being the poor man's minister, and it was only, my lord, by being told that my congregation would consist mainly of plain, unlettered, humble people, that I was prevailed on to leave my country charge."[1]

Conditions in the Church of Scotland had become grim. The "Ten Years' Conflict" saw the relatively small question of the abolition or modification of the practice of patronage grow into the full blown problem concerning the fundamental relation of Church and State. By its Veto Act the General Assembly held that no patron could "intrude" an unacceptable minister upon an unwilling congregation. The civil court declared that the patron had the sole right of nominating a minister to a vacant charge, and directed that the Church

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1 David Patrick and William Geddie, editors, Chambers's Encyclopedia, A Dictionary of Universal Knowledge, V, 477.

should forthwith ordain and install such ministers whether the Church so desired or not. The issue became one not of Patronage or Intrusion, but one where the very spiritual independence of the Church was at stake. The Church during these ten years of conflict (1833-1843) contended that the State had overstepped her bounds and had relegated to herself powers which belonged only to Christ as the Head of His Church. "The contest at first," said Lord Cockburn, "was merely about patronage, but this point was soon absorbed in the far more vital question whether the Church had any spiritual jurisdiction independent of the control of the civil power."[1] When Parliament refused to listen to the Church's claims, all hope of reconciliation was dissipated when the Assembly met in Edinburgh in May 1843. The Disruption took place on that date when four hundred and seventy-four ministers and a host of elders left the Established Church to form the Free Church of Scotland.

During these ten eventful years Thomas Guthrie was vigorously "educating the people" in the issues involved.

> We were, in all seasons, under all circumstances, and into every parish into which we could get admittance (meeting in a barn or a loft if the church was shut against us), holding public meetings, in addition to frequent and anxious councils in Edinburgh.[2]

These engagements took him into England and Ireland as well as

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1 Quoted by Smeaton, op. cit., p. 53.

2 Guthrie, The Present Duty and Prospects of the Church of Scotland, p. 2.

throughout Scotland. Nor was he dismayed when the Court of Session issued an interdict forbidding him to preach in the parish churches of Strathbogie, the ministers of which had been deposed for defying the Assembly's instructions. His reaction to the interdict ("which I had the honour to be the first to break") was characteristic:

> The interdict forbade me, under penalty of the Calton-hill-jail, to preach the Gospel in the parish churches of Strathbogie. I said, the parish churches are stone and lime and belong to the state; I will not intrude there. It forbade me to preach in the school-houses. I said, the school-houses are stone and lime; I will not intrude there. It forbade me to preach in the churchyard, and I said the dust of the dead is the state's, and I will not intrude there. But when these Lords of Session forbade me to preach my Master's blessed Gospel and offer of salvation to sinners anywhere in that district under the arch of heaven, I put the interdict under my feet and--I preached the Gospel.[1]

In the inner-councils of the leaders of the Church, Guthrie carried a considerable share of the responsibilities, but not as an ecclesiastic in matters of Church law nor as a close-thinking debater on the fine points at issue. These matters he left to the admittedly superior talents of others. His contribution was valuable "especially on matters which might be injuriously affected by latitudinarianism on the one hand, or by narrowness and bigotry on the other."[2] In the words of one historian of this eventful period, it was thus:

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1 Guthrie, The Liberty of the Christian Church. A Report of the Speeches at the Meeting in Edinburgh, Jan 14, 1861

2 James Dodds, op. cit., pp. 120-21.

> A massive sense of what was right and true and simple, as contrasted with wire-drawn refinements and fantasticalities and affectations and posturings,--a mind decisively of the gravitative, not of the magnetic order,--rendered him marvellously trustworthy as an adviser in practical emergencies. Extremely valuable, therefore, to all who wish to ascertain the very truth in the matter, are his utterances and decisions in connection with the Church conflict.[1]

But was Thomas Guthrie one of the greater leaders of the Disruption? A proper answer to this question can be had only if it be understood that the Disruption became what might be termed a movement of the people. By common consent, Chalmers, Cunningham and Candlish were the most subtle and penetrating minds which guided and expounded the involved issues evolving from the conflict. But even these astute ecclesiastics were unable to resolve the difficulties by high level negotiations with the leaders of State. The Government, in fact, was unimpressed and proceeded under the assumption that if a secession did come (which they thought unlikely), "not more than some thirty ministers would give up their livings, led by 'wild men' like Dr Chalmers, Professor of Theology in Edinburgh University, Dr Thomas Guthrie of Old Greyfriars, and Dr Robert Candlish of St George's."[2] Actually, Guthrie realized that his province lay outwith the legal aspect of the struggle and was grateful for those able to lead in this respect. As he said himself:

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1 P. Bayne, op. cit., p. 208.
2 Sir Herbert Maxwell, Edinburgh: A Historical Study, p. 282.

> I have never taken any part in the active management of our Church; I never belonged to what might be called the council of its leaders, but all along . . . I fought for my own hand. No man can be more thankful than I am that God has, in His kind providence, furnished our Church with so many men who have not only the talent but the taste for Church courts. I am content to remain in the cabin, and allow other folk to walk the quarterdeck.[1]

When, however, it became necessary to turn to the people, Guthrie came into his own, for it was in his ability to sway the multitudes that he took his most conspicuous place in the Church's leadership--and none was more successfully conspicuous than he. Had the people not been informed and enlisted in terms they could understand, the Disruption would have been nothing more than another of many secessions. But the people followed, and no man was Guthrie's peer in this particular of that momentous enterprize. In the words of a contemporary periodical:

> Dr Cunningham could lay down in beautiful array all the acts of the church courts, and concessions or exactions of the State . . .; and Dr Candlish could elaborately define the purpose and motive of every such act; but it was reserved for Dr Guthrie to recall the memories of Drumclog and Rullion Green; to appeal to the covenanting sentiment that yet burns and flashes in the Scottish heart; to call forth that stern but enthusiastic spirit which had braved the iron boot of "Bluidy M'Kinzie", and the cord and pistol of "Claverse"; and which, if need were, could do so again. Dr Guthrie is tall, thin, and vehement, but possessed of that heartfelt eloquence and declamatory ideality which pre-eminently fitted him to be the leader of the people.[2]

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1 Memoir, pp. 361-62.

2 Hogg's Instructor, 1849, p. 402. "The most distinguished men in the "Non-Intrusion" controversy, and in the Free Church, were undoubtedly that quaternion, of which Doctors Guthrie, Cunningham, and Candlish were the pillars, and Dr Chalmers the capital."

After the Free Church of Scotland was launched upon its course, "Guthrie's florid eloquence often electrified the Assembly,"[1] and it was he who . . .

> . . . represented its sense of new-found power not only to maintain itself, but to give out energy as never before; its obedience to the command, "to launch out into the deep and cast the net on the other side"; its interest in the children of the poor, in the home heathen, in the continent of Europe, in the world.[2]

It was his "winged words" which brought out "the response which the heart of the people gave to the self-sacrifice of the ministers, and secured, under God, the success of the Free Church from the first day of its existence."[3]

But he was greatly relieved when the smoke and dust of battle began to settle. "I am glad," said he, "to get rid of controversy. I wish to devote my days to preaching, and to the pastoral superintendence of my people." His immediate task was to build Free St. John's Church within fifty yards of the parish church (of the same name) he had so recently completed. He was followed by some ninety-five percent of his old congregation, and by all but one of his officers. His popularity as a preacher increased with every passing Sunday, and his work among the poor became even more intense.

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1 J.R. Fleming, The History of the Church of Scotland, 1843-1874, p. 14. "The eloquent oratory of Thomas Guthrie" made him "a giant in debate", a fact which placed him very near Chalmers in point of influence. p. 72.

2 J.A. Wylie, op. cit., p. 287.

3 Ibid., p. 283.

The new Free Church, however, was having its difficulties. In many parishes they were not allowed sites upon which to build churches and they were often forced to hold services in the open air. Guthrie was incensed that the Established Church landowners should take this bigoted stand and, besides acting as an important witness before the Parliamentary Committee appointed to investigate this situation, he made numerous speeches throughout Scotland in protest. In addition to the Site Controversy, which it was called and which was amicably settled, the ministers of the Free Church found themselves without homes as soon as they left the Establishment. This condition became particularly severe in country parishes where it was not unusual that ministers and their families were compelled to live under difficult and often even dangerous circumstances. Guthrie was touched by the plight of his brethren, and when the Church began what became known as the Manse Scheme he was requested to take the responsibility of securing through voluntary contributions one hundred thousand pounds sterling for the purpose of erecting urgently needed manses. Within a year, as a result of his personal exertions and at the permanent cost of his own health, the Manse Scheme fund exceeded by a comfortable margin the amount asked by Assembly.

At its inception the Free Church was also faced with the question of education. Either the Church must build its

own schools and furnish its own teachers, or throw its influence behind some scheme of national education. Guthrie earnestly felt, in opposition to the majority of the Church's leaders, that the Church was demonstrably unable to cope with the expanded educational needs of the country, and that it was therefore imperative that a national program be adopted. To this end he gave himself vigorously and, though he was defeated in his initial efforts, he lived to see the day when his proposals prevailed.

Closely allied to his concern for the education of the people as a whole was his more immediate concern for the welfare of the miserable little waifs roaming the wynds and closes of his parish. Having heard of successful work with such children elsewhere he was encouraged in his determination to rouse Edinburgh to her duty in regard to these "city Arabs" in her midst. His efforts met with instantaneous and generous approbation. Not only were his Ragged Schools, as his institutions became familiarly known, founded in Edinburgh in a matter of weeks after he made his plans public, but he became known everywhere as the "Apostle of Ragged Schools" as he went about the cities of Britain leaving similar schools in his wake. His enduring fame beyond question is due, as it is likely to continue to be due, to this work more than to any other one thing.

Nor were these the only activities which occupied this

unusually busy preacher. He was to be seen . . .

> . . . preaching at the opening of new churches, when the mere fact of his presence was certain to attract larger crowds than otherwise would have assembled; also to plead the cause of Wesleyan Missions, to protest against any relaxation of Sabbath Observance, to take his share in Presbytery, Synod, and Commission of Assembly work, and yet to maintain at its high standard the quality of his Sabbath discourses, as well as to fulfil all other necessary pastoral duties. To discharge these functions with the ability, assiduity, and popular acceptance ever attending his efforts, showed a rare power of mental concentration, coupled with a most versatile adaptability to circumstances.[1]

It was during these crowded post-Disruption years that he took up the battle for temperance--a warfare he waged unceasingly and with marked success to the end of his life. Having witnessed the havoc wrought by drink upon the wretched people of his parish, he gave his unstinted efforts, by pen and on the platform, to the extirpation of this evil. He gave his influence to the organization of Temperance Societies, and to the marshalling of public sentiment behind certain legislative enactments. But, perhaps, his greatest contribution was the general influence he exerted in announcing himself a total abstainer at a time when such were few in prominent circles in the land.

The burden of his many-sided work proved too much even for his rugged physique, and a heart condition developed which in addition to very nearly ending his life at the time (1847),

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1 O. Smeaton, op. cit., p. 83.

hampered him throughout life and finally brought about his death. He was compelled to leave his pulpit entirely for the most part of two years (1848-1849) for a complete rest. Upon resumption of his work, William Hanna (son-in-law of Thomas Chalmers) who had been a supply minister minister during his absence, was secured as his colleague, and remained his co-worker as long as Guthrie remained in the active ministry. Their relationship, as was not always true of collegiate churches where one of the ministers was the recognizedly superior and most popular preacher, was most cordial and congenial. Hanna testifies to this happy partnership:

> It was my happy privilege, counted by me among the greatest I have enjoyed, of being for fifteen years his colleague in the ministry. . . To one coming from a remote country parish . . . the position was a trying one [for me]--to occupy such a pulpit every Sunday side by side with such a preacher. But never can I forget the kindness and tenderness, the constant and delicate consideration, with which Dr. Guthrie ever tried to lessen its difficulties and soften its trials. Brother could not have treated brother with more affectionate regard.[1]

The degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the University of Edinburgh in 1849, "the first time since the Disruption that the Senatus had conferred a degree

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1 Memoir, p. 534. Guthrie dedicated his first volume of published sermons, The Gospel in Ezekiel, 1855, to Hanna: "To you, my dear Sir, I dedicate these Discourses . . . as a mark of the warm affection which I cherish for you, and of the kind, cordial, and most happy intercourse, which we have enjoyed since our union as colleagues and pastors of the same flock."

in divinity on any minister outside the pale of the Church of Scotland."[1] The following fifteen years before his retirement passed rapidly, but they were years of highest usefulness in spite of the limiting effects of an impaired heart. All of the projects which held his heart's interest received from him stimulating and effective support. At the insistance of certain publishers he consented to allow the publication of a volume of his sermons. Though at first reluctant to publish these sermons, his book was so widely acclaimed and cordially received both at home and abroad that many more were given to the public before his death.

In 1862 the Free Church by acclamation called him to fill the moderator's chair. Soon thereafter, in 1864, in his sixty-first year and after thirty-four years as a minister, twenty-one of these at Free St. John's, Thomas Guthrie retired from the pulpit--for it was time, as he phrased it, to get "Out of Harness".[2] The final words of his letter of resignation to his congregation are moving and pathetic:

> I commend you all very affectionately to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost. And now and finally, brethren, farewell. Farewell to you, farewell to my pulpit: I preach no more. The voice is in my ear which says, "Go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."[3]

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1 Ibid., p. 533.

2 Out of Harness, the title of a book written by Guthrie containing certain retirement observations of the past.

3 Guthrie, A Letter to Free St. John's.

As soon as his retirement was made known a spontanious movement was begun which ended in a testimonial public meeting attended by a great gathering of public and private citizens who presented him with five thousand pounds sterling and Mrs. Guthrie with a silver service. People of every creed and class contributed to and participated in this generous testimonial to their well-loved and benevolent fellow townsman:

> Probably no other man, certainly no other clergyman, in the three kingdoms could have gathered such an array of friends and admirers, both clerical and lay--"reverend", "right reverend", and "right honourable"--around him, vieing with each other to do him honour.[1]

Nor was this phase of the honor lost to Guthrie:

> Next to the approbation of God, of my blessed Master, and of my own conscience, there is nothing on which I set so high a value as the assurance this testimonial warrants me to entertain, that I have won a place in the hearts of other Christians besides those of my own denomination.[2]

His retirement years were far from idle. "I hope," he said with feeling, "when the last summons comes, it will find me working as well as watching." It did. As he remarked, the physicians who had sealed his lips from the pulpit had not tied his hands, and so with great alacrity he accepted the editorship of a Christian home-periodical, The Sunday Magazine, especially published to make his talents available to the public. Through this channel he exerted a most extensive influence

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1 A newspaper quotation in the Memoir, p. 715.
2 Ibid., p. 716.

by his pen and achieved considerable "literary distinction" as well as a very wide-spread popularity. Many of his serially written articles were later published in book form. His many frienships throughout Great Britain enabled him to bring to the pages of his magazine articles by leading figures in various walks of life. And it was always his delight that his periodical furnished him with a medium for reaching thousands of people for the purpose of promoting the numerous benevolent enterprizes in which he had long been interested.

But at long last his great heart, so long so full to overflowing for the good of his Master's cause and the welfare of his fellowman, could stand the strain no longer and he was forced into almost complete inactivity. Seeking a milder climate, rest and a change of scene, he removed to St. Leonard's-on-the-sea, Sussex, England, in January of 1873--a helpless invalid. The kingdom's newspapers published daily reports of the state of his health. Queen Victoria, who in time past "on various occasions bestowed on him special marks of attention," through Admiral Baillie Hamilton and the Duke of Argyll (his intimates for many years), was continuously informed of his condition. The Empress of Germany also telegraphed enquiries. The accounts of these last days are moving in their simplicity. When asked if he would like for the family to sing to him, he remarked, "Give me a bairn's hymn," a remark which speaks eloquently of the child-like simplicity

which ever marked the singularly devoted life of this prince of the Scottish pulpit. In quiet confidence Thomas Guthrie died February 23, 1873.

The reaction of the nation to the news of his death may be summarized in the warm words of an Edinburgh newspaper:

> After all the warnings we have had, it is difficult to realise that the tall, stately form, the genial countenance, the ready smile and sympathising word of Dr. Guthrie will never more be seen or heard in our midst. One of the greatest of modern philanthropists and pulpit orators, one of the most large-hearted of Christian men, now sleeps the quiet sleep of death . . .[1]

Burial took place in the Grange Cemetary, Edinburgh, in the presence of more than thirty thousand people of every station and rank, a funeral scene seldom if ever witnessed on such a scale in Edinburgh. The procession was made up of dignitaries and magistrates in their robes of office, representatives of every Scottish Protestant denomination, Wesleyan Methodists from England and Waldensians from Italy, and, most significant of all, over two hundred children from the Ragged Schools, every child of which could say (in a sense at least) as one was overheard to say on this occasion, "He was all the father I ever knew." Under severe emotional stress, Dr. Robert Candlish preached the funeral sermon at St. John's Church, the final words of which convey the impression that the great congregation before him were all but forgotten:

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1 Daily Review, p. 20.

> Friend and brother! Comrade in the fight! Companion in tribulation!--Farewell! But not forever. May my soul, when my hour comes, be with thine.[1]

Though dead, Thomas Guthrie still speaks. The casual wayfarer, or the pilgrim to the place where the great red stone marks his grave, will be confronted with the same message the living voice so vividly and earnestly proclaimed to the numberless thousands who came that they might hear:

> Seek Him That Turneth the Shadow
> of Death into the Morning! The
> Lord is His Name.

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1 Barbour, The Life of Alexander Whyte, pp. 158-59. Robert Candlish and Guthrie were life-long and very close friends. Each admired and respected the peculiar capacities of the other. Interestingly enough, they were born the same year and died the same year.

Guthrie requested that nothing but a Bible passage be inscibed on his grave stone.

THOMAS GUTHRIE

the

PHILANTHROPIST

"The men who have immortalized themselves and their times are those who, amid the din of machinery, or in retreats remote from the bustle of camps, the intrigue of courts and the noisy combats of public assemblies, have studied the arts, not of war, but of peace."

Thomas Guthrie

CHAPTER II

THE PHILANTHROPIST

"If I have lived for one thing more than another, it has been to save and raise the very poorest of the poor."
Guthrie

Next to his pulpit and pastoral ministrations Thomas Guthrie gave most of his time and talents to the work of Christian philanthropy. The great variety of good works involved in these endeavors makes it virtually impossible in a paper like this to examine them all.[1] The purpose of this chapter is to see Guthrie as a philanthropist, not to carefully study each and every cause in which he was engaged. Although other projects in which he engaged will be mentioned in a cursory manner, we feel that a rather exhaustive examination of one of these, namely Ragged Schools, will best serve to set forth Guthrie as a philanthropist.

Ragged Schools were at once the most important of his benevolent works, the closest to his heart and the most lasting in the effects and results achieved. They were for years upper-most in his mind and received repeated blessings from

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1 Some of these were: Sailors' Life-Boat Institutes, Young Men's Christian Association, the Bible Society, Female Protection, Sabbath Observance, Housing of the Working Classes, Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Shorter Hours for Shop Employes, the Saturday Half-Holiday, Army Moral and Social Reform, Anti-Slavery League, Waldensian Aid Society.

his dying lips; and of the thirty thousand people at his funeral who gathered to pay him a final tribute, "there was no spectacle so eloquent a s the Ragged School children, representing the long line of those who owed their rescue more to him than to any other human agency."[1]

But he always displayed a generous sympathy with all that tends to progress or improvement of any kind. This general sympathy and desire for universal betterment drew him into the great multiplicity of benevolent schemes which won for him "an imperishable name as a social reformer and philanthropist." His first winter in Edinburgh found him improvising a soup-kitchen for the starving inhabitants of his parish. From this beginning his interests spread until they included practically every movement of human welfare in his day. Of these the following are, perhaps, most important:

I. THE MANSE FUND

When the Disruption of 1843 gave birth to the Free Church of Scotland, its first General Assembly heard Thomas Guthrie pleading the plight of manseless ministers and predicting severe hardships for his country brethren. But the Sustentation Fund, church buildings, schools and colleges had a prior claim upon the resources of the Church which, immediate-

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1 Daily Review, p. 46.

ly upon severing its connection with the Establishment, found itself without these facilities. The predicted hardships materialized. Ministers lived with their families in hovels, services of worship were held in barns or in the open. Guthrie lashed out at the tyrrany of those landed gentlemen who refused land for the erection of buildings for the use of the Free Church.[1]

It is probably impossible to say what one man (if, indeed, it was one man) originated the Manse Fund scheme but, however that may be, it was universally conceded that Thomas Guthrie was the man best qualified to be its executor.[2] The General Assembly of 1845 unanimously requested him to undertake the task. It was agreed that a sum of £50,000 was needed at once, and that another £50,000 would be required within the next few years. The Free Church during the past two years had already received from its burdened members some £700,000, and it was generally realized that Guthrie, for this reason, had agreed to a very difficult undertaking. The well, many thought, may have been pumped dry.

However, with his usual vigor and determination, without committees or deputies, Guthrie set to work. Thus:

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1 Memoir, p. 404. "No man denounced such conduct in more unmeasured terms, nor was any name more obnoxious, consequently in certain high quarters than his."

2 Norman L. Walker, op. cit., pp. 48-9. "No man then living was better fitted to undertake this business. . . And when it was known, the general feeling was that the work was virtually done."

> To the cause of manse building, Dr. Guthrie communicated a mighty impulse, as he did to every object to which he lent the advocacy of his marvellous eloquence. A whole year did he devote to this herculian but philanthropic labour. He travelled over almost all Scotland in prosecution of his self-imposed task, and Dr. Guthrie's voice, we may say, it was that called into existence the early manses of the Free Church of Scotland. He began his tour at the close of one Assembly, and when he appeared in the next, he was able to report as the result of his year's efforts, a subscribed sum of £116,370.[1]

His astonishing, single-handed success gives a significant glimpse into that which made him a man of unusual philanthropic stature: that is, the ability to feel deeply the needs of others, coupled with a genius for effectively translating his own sentiments into the hearts of others. "The choice of the campaigner," according to Fleming, "was singularly happy, for this master of humour and pathos succeeded by his peculiar magic in drawing money out of all and sundry."[2]

II. TEMPERANCE

The use of alcoholic stimulants was the common practice even among ministers during the first half of the nineteenth century in Scotland. Guthrie said that as a University student he did not know of a single abstainer either in the study body or among the clergy of the Church. For several years Guthrie was counted among those who were non-abstainers.

But he had not long been in Edinburgh before he was con-

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1 J.A. Wylie, op. cit., p. lv.
2 J.R. Fleming, op. cit., p. 65.

vinced that he was wrong, and his familiar voice was soon calling upon others to feel likewise. On a trip to Ireland he was highly impressed when an ignorant Roman Catholic coachman refused his offer of a drink on a bitterly cold, wet night. He never forgot that experience. "That circumstance," he said, "along with the scenes in which I was called to labour daily for years, made me a teetotaller."[1] That Irish coachman was an abstainer for religious reasons, and Guthrie felt the power of it. Was he causing his weaker brethren to stumble? was the question with which he felt he was faced. He concluded that no Christian had the right to offer an example that might cause the ruin of others. He forthwith aligned himself with the small number of despised total abstainers.

> Dr. Guthrie was the first leader of the Church to break away from these customs; and his becoming an abstainer was greeted with much head-shaking amongst the devout, since it was taken for granted that his motive for doing so must have been that of personal prudence. Only a man, it was assumed, who had found moderation impossible could be forced back on abstinence.[2]

The public soon knew that Guthrie was on another philanthropic war-path. He gave the full weight of his popular eloquence to the dedicated proposition that this "horrid Moloch", intemperance, must be brought under severe control. He helped found several temperance societies, wrote many widely circulated tracts, preached passionately on the subject on

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1 Memoir, p. 573.
2 G.F. Barbour, op. cit., p. 234.

numerous occasions[1] and took a conspicuous part in the agitation for passage of what became known as the Forbes Mackenzie Act which provided for the closing of public-houses on Sunday, limited their week-day business hours and otherwise restricted alcoholic abuses. It was intemperance, Guthrie was sure, that was the acid that killed most of the good seed he tried to plant in his parish, and he had a sincere hatred of it. Professor Blaikie is quoted as saying he attended meetings at which he had heard "Dr. Guthrie deliver speeches on behalf of temperance which, in all the higher characteristics of oratory fell little, if at all, short of Demosthenes."[2] But many of his fellow-ministers, he lamented, remained unmoved:

> Strange that ministers will meet in General Assemblies and discuss this thing and that thing, nor address themselves aright and to self-denial to this spring and wellhead of miseries and murders, the damnation of souls and the ruin of our land.[3]

Before his death, however, he had the satisfaction of knowing that not only his Church, but his country also had gone a long way toward following in the footsteps of those pioneers and leaders in the temperance movement of which he was a chief.

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1 Some of his tracts: A Plea on Behalf of Drunkards and Against Drunkenness; New Year's Drinking; A Happy New Year; A Word in Season; The Contrast; Old Year's Warning. The City, Its Sins and Sorrows is a series of sermons from Luke 19:41, "He beheld the city, and wept over it." Of it his sons say: "None of his writings made a profounder impression, and none has been more extensively used." Memoir, p. 580

2 O. Smeaton, op. cit., p. 100.

3 Memoir, p. 582.

III. NATIONAL EDUCATION

Guthrie's activities contributing to the national education movement will be discussed more fully in connection with the Ragged Schools. Here it will be remarked only that his interest in and advocacy of a national compulsory system of education was warmly espoused as early as the Disruption, and never abated during the rest of his life. He led a minority who, in opposition to setting up a parochial system for an already heavily burdened Free Church, declared the time ripe for abandoning the inadequate and contending denominational schools, and ripe for a national system which knew no bounds and would make every child's education compulsory. The majority of his brethren, however, led by his friend Candlish, prevailed, and Free Church schools were built throughout Scotland. Though he gave full credit for the good work of these schools, Guthrie never for a moment relaxed his efforts or compromised his stand in the matter. It was, therefore, with a high degree of personal satisfaction that he received news of passage of the National Education Act of 1872 embodying in large measure the very principles for which he had consistently contended for the thirty years past. He had always held that the State was duty bound to see that every child within her shores received a practical and adequate education; that no parent had the right to prevent this. And thus, within a year of his death, it transpired.

IV. RAGGED SCHOOLS

"The land has groaned beneath the guilt of blood
Spilt wantonly; for every death-doomed man
Who, in his boyhood, has been left untaught
That Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace, unjustly dies.
But ah! how many are thus left untaught!"[1]

1. A Backward Look:

Scotland, like her sister nations, has ever felt the thrust of Jesus Christ's words: "The poor ye shall have with you alway." Having never had an affluence of those things which make for material wealth, she has had to wrestle with her poor-problem handicapped by her own lack of means.

As long ago as 1424 she passed and Act to deal with the hordes of itinerant beggars who infested the land from sea to sea.[2] These poor folk were either evicted from their small crofts by the land-barons of the day, or were simply unable to support themselves on their meager holdings. This early Act made "tokens"[3] available to worthy beggars as a method of licensing them to beg in public with State approval. The poor received no other relief; in fact, the able-bodied vagrants, "sornars, overlyars, maisterful beggars, bards and

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1 Author not known. Quoted by Guthrie, Seed*Time and Harvest of Ragged Schools, p. 177.

2 Thomas Ferguson, The Dawn of Scottish Welfare, p. 5.

3 H.F. Henderson, op. cit., p. 164. "As recently as 1845, badges were distributed . . . in Brechin."

feigned fools, and sic like runners about," were imprisoned so long as they could live on their own goods, but upon their becoming completely destitute, "their ears are to be nailed to the trone or to any other tree and then cut off, and themselves banished the country."[1]

"The first real Scots poor law" (1579) made an effort to put able-bodied beggars to work, but the administrators of the law, the kirk-sessions, did little to enforce it. So in 1605 it was decreed that:

> All maisterfull and strong beggaris may be tane by any man, and being broght to any sheref, bailyie of regalitie or burgh; and gettend thame declarit maisterfull beggaris may set his burning irne upon thame and reteane thame as slaves, and gif ony of thame thairefter escaipe the awner may have repetition of thame as of uther gudes.[2]

The children of these unfortunates could be siezed by anyone and "held at work" for the rest of their lives. They became their master's property, subject to his discipline "barring torture and death."

This state of slavery, though often changed in details, was the normal procedure for dealing with the poor during the seventeenth century. That it was unsuccessful is evidenced by the fact that there were at the beginning of the eighteenth century an estimated 200,000 vagrants and unemployed swarming over the country.[3] So a remedy was proposed in the form of

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1 Thomas Johnston, The History of the Working Classes in Scotland, p. 67.
2 Ibid., p. 68.
3 H.F. Henderson, op. cit., p. 163.

compulsory slave owning, the number of slaves to increase with slave-holding family's income, and the remainder of the beggars sold to the gallies or to the West Indies.

But the hordes of poor received new recruits from what has become known as the "Clearances". "Toward the end of the seventeenth century and in the early years of the eighteenth century the landlords discovered"[1] that their profits could be increased by letting their lands to large farmers instead of to small cottagers, or turn large areas to sheep grazing, or consign large tracts to hunting and shooting preserves. This rooting-out process lasted well into the nineteenth century, and "we are justified in estimating the total number of people cleared from the Highland counties [alone] to be not less than two hundred thousand."[2] This drift of outcast humanity lodged itself in the cities' miserable slums, or overflowed the country into the virgin lands of the New World.

To add to the confusion and misery, the turn of the nineteenth century witnessed the invasion of Scotland and England by an extensive army of Irish laborers who over-filled the demands precipitated by the new industrialism for cheap workers.[3] The supply of labor far exceeded the demand, wages

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1 T. Johnston, op. cit., pp. 182 ff.
2 Loc. cit.
3 J.L. and Barbara Hammond, The Age of the Chartists 1832-1854, p. 23. Poor Law Commission Report, 1836: "The Irish emigration into Britain is an example of a less civilised population spreading themselves as a kind of substratum beneath a more civilised community."

tumbled to a pitiable low, outed Highlander and starving Irishman competed for existence, "all of them living precariously in squalor and dirt in ramshakled hovels,"[1] until by 1850 "about one-fourth of the population of the industrial areas was Irish."[2]

2. The Church and the Poor:

John Knox would have had the Church make the poor her responsibility, and in his First Book of Discipline it was decreed that "every several kirk must provide for the poor within itself: for fearful and horrible it is that the poor . . . are universally so contemned and despised." At the time of the Scottish Reformation the Church "owned half the entire land revenues of the country,"[3] which Knox had assumed would be the property of the Reformed Kirk. "Un-fortunately, John Knox's thoughtful plans for the benefit of the poor and the needy were little else than 'a devout imagination'. The teinds never became available to the Church for the support of the poor as he had desired"[4] for the simple reason that "the barons had siezed practically supreme power in the State, absorb-

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1 T. Johnston, op. cit., pp. 274-79.
2 Guthrie, Seed-Time and Harvest, p. 150. ". . . a large portion of what appear to be our crimes, is due to Irish Roman Catholics--their presence among us making us appear much lower in the scale of morality than we would otherwise do."
3 T. Johnston, op. cit., p. 34.
4 H.F. Henderson, op. cit., p. 167.

ed the Church lands and Church wealth, . . . and sneered at the Protestant clergy's demands that a portion of the estate of the old church should be devoted to the poor."[1]

Nevertheless, the kirk-sessions undertook the responsibility of the poor within their respective parish bounds, to be joined at a later date as joint-administrators by the heritors. Relief revenue was had mainly through voluntary collections at Communion Sunday and by poor-box offerings at the church door.[2]

This method of poor relief continued until the early years of 1840 when it was recognized that whatever be its good points and past brave efforts, it was now antiquated and hopelessly inadequate. Some means of compulsory taxation and systematic administration became imperative.[3] The Disruption of 1843 sealed the issue.

> There can be no question that the changed situation made a secular system of relief an immediate necessity. The Church parochial machinery had hopelessly broken down. The Kirk-sessions could no longer rely on collections as a mainstay of poor relief. Compulsion needed to be applied to the whole community to meet a crying social distress.[4]

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1 T. Johnston, op. cit., p. 64.

2 H.F. Henderson, op. cit., pp. 170-71. "One odious source" of revenue: fines imposed by sessions on persons found guilty of "scandalous sins". Others: hire of mort clothes; ringing bell at funeral; money over 100 merks won at cards.

3 Robert Mackie, A Short History of Scotland, pp. 401-402. "If in the rural parishes in the Lowlands the machinery of poor relief creaked and groaned, in the Highlands and . . . city parishes it had broken down altogether."

4 J.R. Fleming, op. cit., p. 54.

It seems strange indeed that under these circumstances the Church should have resisted passage of the Poor Law of 1845. Henderson says, no doubt rightly, that "probably no Church in Christendom has ever fought such an earnest and successful war against poverty as the Scottish Church has done." But he also says that before 1845 . . .

> . . . the masses of the people were allowed to grow up in ignorance, destitution, disease, and slavery, while neither Church nor clergy, neither law nor gospel, thought it their duty to interfere. . . The life of the poor and the lot of the labourer was one of misery, degradation, and danger, and the religion of the time went on indifferent to the existence of the terrible evil.[1]

Isolated works of charity like Chalmers' notable and successful scheme in his Glasgow parish were not sufficient to stem the tide which justly and wisely (it would seem) swept this responsibility from the ecclesiastical into the secular area.[2]

3. The Children of the Poor:

The children of the poor were frequently dwarfed, maimed, stunted and even killed by the environmental hardships into which they were born. Because poverty forced them to work they were exploited by industrialists who hired them in great numbers, worked them oppressively long hours and paid them

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1 H.F. Henderson, op. cit., pp. 161-63.

2 Guthrie was one of those who opposed the Poor Law. "I believe the country, and the poor themselves, would be much happier without a Poor Law." He favored voluntary gifts and Christian voluntary workers supplemented by funds from the State. See Out of Harness, pp. 93-4, 97.

pittifully little.[1] The factory conditions under which these little toilers (many of them from five to ten years of age) labored were calculated to ruin them mentally, physically and spiritually.[2] In spite of repeated Parliamentary reforms regulating hours and ages of employment . . .

> . . . children were steadily supplanting adults in the factories; during the period 1857-1862 adult male labour had decreased by 18 per cent., while child male labour had increased by 53 per cent. and child female labour by 78 per cent."[3]

Some scattered efforts were made to care for the orphan, illegitimate and deserted children. In the early eighteen hundreds a system of "boarding out" necessitous children came into use: they were placed in homes where they were kept for a nominal fee, and remained there until able to care for themselves. Though abuses have been cited, the system was widely used and with overall successful results. In 1825 "Cauvin's Hospital" was founded in Edinburgh "for the purpose of endowing and maintaining a hospital for the support and education of boys."[4] "Town Hospitals" were estab-

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1 T. Johnston, op. cit., p. 306. At David Dale's "enlightened" New Lanark factory, children were paid three-pence per twelve hour day.

2 H.F. Henderson, op. cit., pp. 182-83. "The rooms the workers toiled in were full almost to suffocation; there was neither rest nor cleanliness; the food they ate was bad, the air they breathed was foul, and the consequence was deformity, ignorance, premature death, and that to such an extent as made the factory system of our country . . . about the most malignant curse with which a land was ever afflicted."

3 T. Johnston, op. cit., p. 313.

4 T. Ferguson, op. cit., p. 294.

lished in Glasgow and Edinburgh for orphan children; but it was not until 1802 that illegitimate and "stray" children were admitted. Hundreds of children were without any of the amenities or restrictions of either home or institution. They were caught up in the grim shadow of pauperism which cast its ever lengthening growth across the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1820 one person out of every forty was a declared pauper.[1] In 1840 an Edinburgh newspaper reported a large public meeting called to consider what should be done with the increasing numbers of poor in the city, and observed that "the pauperism of Scotland, in its present deplorable extent, is comparatively new to the country."[2]

4. Guthrie and the Ragged Child:

> "They, an' be damn'd! What right hae they
> To meat or sleep or light o' day,
> Far less to riches, pow'r or freedom,
> But what your lordship likes to gie them?"[3]

Down at the bottom of every society there are to be found the dregs. It may be said, as it has been, that Walter Scott saw only the romantic past and "nothing of the festering squalor of the old town of Edinburgh;"[4] but Thomas Guthrie labored under no such romantic delusions. Hear him:

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1 Ibid., p. 187.
2 The Witness, editorial, March 28, 1840.
3 Robert Burns, quoted by Robert Mackie, op. cit., p 385
4 Ibid., p. 398.

> There is a class . . . forming the basis or lying at the bottom of the social fabric . . ., a race who cherish no relard to religion--who instil no moral principle in their offspring--whose minds are uncultivated, and whose habits are brutal, profligate, and licentious.[1]

If the above statement about Scott be true, he stands as a fit symbol of the lethargy and irresponsibility which prevailed, with pittifully few exceptions, throughout the upper classes of Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century. The London Times said of this romanticized era in Britain: "In no other country have the wealth of the proprietor, the power of the magistrate and the accomplishments of the educated, been employed less for the benefit of the many, more for the gain and pleasure of the few."[2]

Guthrie's Edinburgh parish was a concentrated bit of evidence in support of the Times's statement. He shows it to us:

> The mouth of almost every close is filled with loungers, worse than Neapolitan lazzaroni--bloated and brutal figures, ragged and wretched old men, bold and fierce-looking women, and many a half-clad mother, shivering in cold winter, her naked feet on the frozen pavement, a skeleton infant in her arms. . . Dashing in and out of these closes, careening over the open ground, engaged in their rude games, arrayed in flying drapery, here a leg out and there an arm, are crowds of children: their thin faces tell how ill they are fed; their fearful oaths tell how ill they are reared . . . We get hold of one of these boys. Poor fellow! It is a bitter day; and he has neither shoes nor stockings; his naked feet are red, swollen, cracked, ulcerated with cold; a thin, threadworn jacket, with its gaping rents, is all that protects his breast; beneath his shaggy bush of hair he shows a face sharp with want, yet sharp also with intelligence beyond his years.

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1 Guthrie, A Second Plea for Ragged Schools, (hereinafter referred to as Second Plea), p. 36.

2 London Times, July 12, 1847.

> That poor little fellow has learned already to be self-supppрting. He has studied the arts;--he is a master of imposture, lying, begging, stealing; and--small blame to him, but much to those who have neglected him--he had otherwise pined and perished.[1]

Little wonder, with such scenes for his daily fare, that he should have said: "Many a day did I wonder what tempted me to leave that sweet paradise where I spent several years of my life, and enter on a scene of depravity, and drunkenness, and devilry, and disease, and death . . ."[2]

The houses where these children lived were hives of crime; an environment almost certain to make them after the fashion of their elders. In the West Port area proprietors built "skeleton houses of the most rickety description and faulty sanitary construction . . . for the poor with an eye to a large rental value . . . Each room was small and over-crowded, and the passages were dark and ill-ventilated."[3] The great tall "lands" became the crawling, crowded, stinking tenement-warrens of an outcast race. One of these High Street lands fell in 1861 killing thirty-five and injuring "many" of its wretched, cornered inhabitants.[4] These old buildings were of "gigantic dimensions, and were celled off, as it were, into numerous houses, sometimes enclosing in one tenement a popula-

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1 Guthrie, A Plea for Ragged Schools, (hereinafter referred to as First Plea), p. 4.

2 Guthrie, The Poor and How to Help Them, p. 4.

3 T. Ferguson, op. cit., p. 53. For full facts see, W. Anderson, The Poor of Edinburgh and Their Homes (1867).

4 W.M. Gilbert, Edinburgh in the Nineteenth Century, p. 132. This formed the occasion for Guthrie's sermon, Ten Minutes' Warning, which stressed life's uncertainty.

tion that would make no inconsiderable village."[1] Many lived in so-called lodging-houses which, an 1839 report says, were:

> . . . crowded at all hours, but most especially at night. Men, women, and children lived and slept in the same apartment. . . The general charge was two-pence per head for the night . . . where more than two persons occupied the same bed. . . Ten, twelve, and sometimes twenty persons, of both sexes and of all ages, slept promiscuously on the floor in different degrees of nakedness. These places are generally, as regards dirt, damp, and decay, such as no person of common humanity would stable his horse in.[2]

It is notorious that sanitary conditions were in keeping with such housing. In Guthrie's parish "there were neither sewers nor drains; refuse, garbage, and excrement were tossed from the windows on to the narrow streets; no privies were attached to the houses."[3] Under these conditions it was inevitable "that in those crowded 'lands', some of them looking on to sunless and melodorous lanes or courts, all of them without drains and without a proper water supply, should be the breeding grounds of disease."[4] Guthrie investigated several cases of measles among the children and reported that "of fifty-five cases there were but three where we found even the vestige of of a bed. . . Fifty-two had no bed-clothes but their body rags, nor couch but the bare hard boards of the floor."[5] Disease,

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1 T. Ferguson, op. cit., p. 52.
2 Ibid., pp. 60 ff.
3 T. Johnston, op. cit., p. 291.
4 R. Mackie, op. cit., p. 389. For details of disease and death in 19th century Scottish city slums see T. Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 1-3, 285-304.
5 Guthrie, Seed-Time and Harvest, p. 159.

stark poverty, filth and contamination, wretched housing and cruel weather--"one of the vilest climates under heaven"[1]--made the life of Edinburgh's poor children one of violence, misery and often, mercifully, of short duration.

Guthrie was convinced that excessive drinking was the source of most of the evils to which his little "city Arabs" fell heir. Or, as he put it, . . .

> . . . intemperance is the horrid Moloch, the ugly blood-stained idol to which so many young victims are annually sacrificed. Drunkenness, directly or indirectly, supplies our Ragged Schools with scholars, our jails with prisoners, and our poor-houses with by much the largest number of her tenants. . . But for this vice, we should have no rags, nor Ragged Schools in our cities and few paupers to lodge in poor-houses.[2]

He singled out the inordinate number of dram-shops in the city's squalid sections as the principle target of his attacks. He reasoned that if these could be brought under legal controls and restrictions, their harmful effects would be materially reduced. This he claimed to be a matter of prime importance. "Wherever you have dram-shops," he warned, "you have drunkenness; wherever you have drunkenness, you have destitution; wherever you have destitution, the materials of a Ragged School are to be found for their seeking."[3]

But he felt that the greatest enemy standing in the way of

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1 R.L. Stevenson, op. cit., p. 159.
2 Guthrie, Seed-Time and Harvest, p. 148.
3 Guthrie, "Ragged Schools", Lectures Delivered Before the Young Men's Christian Association in Exeter Hall, from November 1854 to February 1855, p. 445.

helping these children was a public's long-standing status quo which would grudgingly, at best, co-operate with an innovator. "Custom will reconcile men and women to conditions that they would find intolerable if they came fresh to them. . . For custom has a magic that takes the sting out of injustice, making it seem rather the decree of heaven than the sin of man."[1] Before grappling with this foe Guthrie waited until he was in a favorable position to strike. Said he: "The pressure of other avocations, the difficulty of getting the public ear in times of excitement, and the lack of any approved remedy for the evil in its first causes, must explain my silence in the past."[2]

5. Ragged Schools Origins:

As the answer to the problem of destitute children, these schools were not original with Guthrie. In 1841, he has said, "My first interest in that subject was awakened by a picture in an old, obscure, decayed burgh, that stands on the shore of the Firth of Forth."[3] This was a picture of John Pounds a cobbler of Portsmouth, England, who had, as he worked at his bench, rescued five hundred children "whom ministers and magistrates, ladies and gentlemen," had left to vice and ruin. The distinctive feature of Pounds' work which intri-

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1 J.L. and Barbara Hammond, op. cit., p. 16.
2 Guthrie, "Ragged Schools", Y.M.C.A. Lectures, p. 442.
3 Guthrie, Second Plea, p. 49.

gued Guthrie was that he persuaded the children into his shop by leading them with a hot potato held under their noses. This scene was a humbling experience: "I confess that I felt humbled; I felt ashamed of myself. I--and so might others--stood reproved for the little that I had done." John Pounds, so far as Guthrie was concerned, was the founder and inspirer of the Ragged School movement. But Pounds' work was a lonely vigil, and his school died with him.

The most important of Guthrie's predecessors in this work was William Watson, Sheriff of Aberdeen, Scotland, who started a school in that city in 1841. "Let it never be forgotten," said Lord Cockburn, "that the introduction of these institutions into Scotland was the work of William Watson alone. He created and got one maintained for years without a single imitation."[1] It was he who made them a community-wide project, who formulated the principles which were later adopted throughout the nation, who first endeavored to establish similar schools in other cities. Guthrie said Watson showed him the way:

> We had been for some time inclined to hold that a remedy was to be found only in the schools which we now propose; but till the experience of Aberdeen had turned what was but a presumption into a fact, we had not the courage to venture on the proposal.[2]

Sheriff Watson tried in vain to establish one of his

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1 Henry Cockburn, op. cit., II, 175.
2 Guthrie, First Plea, p. 8.

schools in Edinburgh. It was a chance meeting of Watson and Guthrie in 1846 that probably determined Guthrie to try again where Watson had failed.[1]

As soon as he had successfully concluded his Manse Scheme campaign, Guthrie proposed to his congregation, now settled in their new sanctuary, that they undertake to feed and teach a few of the parish's ragged children. Although the congregation approved the plan and purchased some equipment toward that end, his officers decided that the responsibility was too great and the plans were dropped. It was a bitter disappointment for Guthrie: "indeed", he recalled, "I never was so much cast down in all my life."[2] But, he concluded,

> . . . it was not a time to sit and wring my hands. Those poor, wretched, ignorant, neglected children were perishing around me, and something must be done. I could appeal to the public, so that instead of having a small cock-boat with the flag of Free St. John's hoisted at its peak, I could build a frigate with a Union Jack flying from its masthead.[3]

Early in 1847, "with fear and trembling," he published his famous pamphlet, A Plea for Ragged Schools, a picturesque and pathetic picture of the problem with its proposed cure. In the past he had moved men at will by his pulpit and platform power, but this was his first attempt to do so with the pen. "I remember," he said, "of returning home after commit-

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1 H.F. Henderson, op. cit., pp. 190-91.
2 Memoir, p. 442.
3 Loc. cit.

ting the manuscript to the printer, and thinking, Well, what a fool I have made of myself!"[1] Thomas Guthrie, however, was never more successful in anything he ever undertook. The effect was "electric" and profound. "It fell on Edinburgh as falls a spark into a powder magazine," he afterward admitted. The celebrated Francis (Lord) Jeffrey wrote to him:

> You must have had too many thanks and compliments from mere strangers, on your late thrilling appeal on behalf of our destitute schools, to feel any surprise at finding among the bearers of such offerings one whose name is probably not unknown to you, and of whom you may even have heard as one of the humblest and least efficient promoters of the great and good work to which you have rendered such memorable service. Among the many thousand hearts that have swelled and melted over these awakening pages, I think I may say that none has been more deeply touched than my own.[2]

At his death an Edinburgh newspaper recalled this First Plea:

> Dr. Guthrie's Plea for Ragged Schools was universally felt to be one of the most successful brochures of the kind ever issued. It constituted an era in the history of these undertakings. It did more than probably any similar production to rouse public attention to a class of children that had previously been utterly neglected. His name became imperishably associated with the enterprise; and, often though he spoke and wrote on it in after years, nothing that he spoke or wrote ever eclipsed his first effort, or cast into the shade his memorable Plea.[3]

The tide of public indignation and sympathy released by that Plea was such that the Lord Provost called a public meeting at the Music Hall April 9, 1847, to give the community an opportunity to speak for itself. Hundreds were turned

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1 Ibid., p. 443.
2 Ibid., p. 444.
3 Daily Review, p. 10.

away for want of space, moving speeches were made, appropriate committees appointed and the necessary machinery for establishing a school was put in motion. The aims of Ragged Schools as Guthrie enunciated them at this meeting may be summarized in the words of Charles Dickens and Sheriff Watson. Dickens wrote to the London Daily News:

> [Ragged Schools] are an effort to introduce among the most miserable and neglected outcasts some knowledge of the commonest principles of morality and religion; to commence their recognition as immortal human creatures before the gaol-chaplain becomes their only school master; to suggest to society that its duty to this wretched throng, foredoomed to crime and punishment, rightfully begins at some distance from the police office.[1]

And Sheriff Watson wrote in his diary:

> May the [Ragged School] movement extend more and more that whole communities of children of the poor may be brought to a knowledge of God and be made heirs of His kingdom.[2]

6. The Bible and Ragged Schools:

"At first we did not attempt much," Guthrie remarked. There were many problems which had to be solved. But the most serious was that which concerned religious education. Guthrie wanted this to be a non-sectarian project, truly catholic and one in which the whole Christian community could join. He felt it to be the hand of Providence that his small congregational scheme had failed and that he had been led to launch out on a

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1 Memoir, p. 436.
2 H.F. Henderson, op. cit., p. 192.

wider venture.

His Plea throughout emphasized the Bible as the foundation upon which the movement must rest. At the public meeting his Plea was used as the guide-book for inaugurating the Edinburgh schools, and the "Constitution and Rules" adopted at that time stated that one part of the daily routine for the children shall be "to teach them the truths of the gospel, making the Holy Scriptures the ground-work of instruction."[1] Every Protestant denomination in the city was represented at the meeting and placed on every committee. The Roman Church absented themselves from this initial meeting, and never offered either help or co-operation. Within a month certain men objected that the teaching of the Bible meant the exclusion of the Romanists, that the school was sectarian and, therefore, unacceptable. The critics were publicly answered by the Association which insisted that the Bible was the school's very foundation.

The controversy threatened disaster at the point of inception; accordingly, another public meeting was called that the school's supporters might decide the issue. It was a lively meeting and one that, because it divided the supporters of a most worthy cause, placed Guthrie in the "painful position" of having to part company with some of his most influential

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1 Guthrie, Supplement to a Plea for Ragged Schools, p. 12.

supporters.[1] As painful as it might have been he was delighted with the meeting's outcome. The result was, he said in a public statement, . . .

> . . . with the exception of a very small portion of the audience, that large and influential assembly, embracing Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents, unequivocally and strongly expressed its approval of all the steps which the Committee had taken, and of the resolution to which they had determined to adhere, that the Bible should be taught in these schools during the ordinary school hours . . .[2]

Another result of the meeting was that the rebuffed critics withdrew their support and formed the United Industrial Schools on the principle of joint secular and separate religious instruction.

As this controversy clearly reveals the underlying principle behind all of Guthrie's philanthropic efforts, we shall hear him further on the subject:

> Religious instruction is regarded by me as the very essence and element of those Ragged Schools.[3]
>
> The Bible [is] the grand turning-point of all our education. We do not teach the children any particular catechism--Church of England, Wesleyan, or Westminster --but we teach them the sound doctrines you find in all those catechisms.[4]
>
> We have honoured and done homage to the Bible, while other instruction is not forgotten; giving a pre-eminent place, in the education of the orphans we have adopted, to the converting and regenerating Word of God. And,

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1 Details of this meeting found in the Report of Discussion Regarding Ragged Schools (1847).

2 Guthrie, Supplement to First Plea, p. 7.

3 Report of Discussion Regarding Ragged Schools, p. 31.

4 Guthrie, The Poor and How to Help Them, p. 22.

> moreover, we have done homage to religion, as being above all other education the most important to these children.[1]

To Guthrie these children were a ripe and ready field for evangelism. Only five of the first two hundred and fifty people he visited in his parish attended any church. He intended that his schools should be the means of meeting this "crying necessity" and of converting his little pagans to Christianity:

> It is an utter abuse of words to call them Roman Catholics, or to call them Protestants . . . The truth is, that they are nothing at all--perfect outcasts, regardless of all religion--without even the profession of any; neither Protestant nor Papist; and it is in that light and character that I must look at them.[2]

This outlook led him to formulate the principle upon which the Association took its stand in regard to Biblical instruction: the principle of in loco parentis, i.e., the schools stood in the place of parents. "Mark how I stand," were his words, . . .

> . . . I say that the responsibility of the religious upbringing of the child lies upon the parent; and if there is no parent, or none to act a parent's part . . . it lies with the man who resolves, by the strength of his own exertions, to save the poor outcast child.[3]

Children of "decent" Roman Catholic parents were allowed to have their children for instruction on Sunday. Beyond this the Association refused to go. "They could not be parties," Guthrie explained, "to yielding to any Roman Catholic priest

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1 Second Plea, p. 24.
2 Report of Ragged Schools Discussion, p. 34.
3 Loc. cit.

the right of withholding from any child of Adam the Word of God."[1] The school was located near Greyfriars Church, a fact which stirred his covenanting blood:

> In the city where John Knox had preached; close by the spot where the heroes of the Covenant had sung their last psalm, and on the scaffold, as on the battle-field, quited them like men; but separated by a narrow valley from the churchyard where out of their graves they seemed to us on to the fight, and call us to be sons worthy of our sires--on that which I call consecrated ground, it was not likely that we would own the power of priests, or bend to Rome.[2]

In his insistance that the Bible have unhampered way within the walls of the schools he makes it clear that he would have nothing to do with even Ragged Schools if this were not so:

> No man feels a more lively interest in these schools than I do. I have thought and pondered over them; I have prayed over them; and I am not ashamed to say I have wept over them. . . But dear as they are to my heart, I say, perish the Ragged Schools if they are only to be kept up by parting with the Bible. . . And now, my lord, if other men won't do it, these hands of mine shall do it;--I shall bind the Bible to the Ragged Schools; and, committing this cause to the care of Providence, there I take my stand.[3]

7. Discipline and Results:

Other schools elsewhere had found the problem of dis-

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1 Supplement to First Plea, p. 9.

2 "Ragged Schools", Y.M.C.A. Lectures, p. 446. His sons say that whatever Guthrie may have thought, the priesthood were not guilty of his charges. Memoir, p. 477.

3 Close of his speech at the public meeting which decided this issue. Report Regarding Ragged School Discussion, p. 37.

cipline of these unbridled children one of formidable proportions, but Guthrie knew his scholars well and approached the problem in his own way:

> These Arabs of the city are wild as those of the desert, and must be broken into three habits--those of discipline, learning, and industry, not to speak of cleanliness. To accomplish this, our trust is in the almost omnipotent power of Christian kindness. Hard words and harder blows are thrown away here. With these, alas! they are too familiar at home, and have learned to be as indifferent to them as the smith's dog to the shower of sparks.[1]

A few years after he wrote those words he declares that his method was successful:

> Throughout that [First] Plea we put our faith in kindness: it has been tried and not found wanting. Those that would have bristled up before a harsh word or a harsher blow have become soft and pliant in her tender hand; and where corporeal punishment has proved indispensable, it has been administered with the smallest possible measure of pain, and the largest possible measure of kindness.[2]

Ragged Schools were an instant and decided success. Twelve months after the schools were in operation, Hugh Miller's newspaper said:

> This is no untried scheme. The moral machinery to which we refer--the Ragged School--the only machinery which can reach this outcast class--has been tried in various places . . . and in every instance with complete success. In Edinburgh, the Ragged Schools of our distinguished townsman, the Rev. Mr. Guthrie, have been in vigorous operation for about twelve months, and the happy results anticipated from them by their benevolent founder have been fully realized.[3]

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1 First Plea, p. 8.
2 Second Plea, p. 27.
3 The Witness, June 24, 1848.

Fifteen years after their founding Guthrie declared that . . .

> . . . they are everywhere; and the best proof of their value lies, perhaps, in the fact that no Ragged School once opened has ever been shut up, while other schemes, from French Republics downward, have burst like soap bubbles.[1]

The reason these schools did not burst like soap bubbles was because they secured results which the public could readily see for itself. "All the children of our schools do not turn out as we could wish," Guthrie confessed to a London audience, but, said he, "produce me a school in London that will give a better account of its boys!"[2]

Grounded as they were in the Christian faith, these schools were able to boast of not a few spiritual results.[3] Although no statistics to this effect have been preserved (if they were ever kept)[4] yet Guthrie was able to say, "We believe that we can trace the salvation of the souls of some of those children to the Ragged Schools; some of them have shown evidence of a decided change; not of outward conduct only, but

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1 Seed-Time and Harvest, p. 124. "Our experiment has proved a triumph--a great, blessed, and unquestionable success." Out of Harness, p. 207.

2 The Poor and How to Help Them, pp. 21-2.

3 Guthrie's teacher requirements: "Sincere piety; a warm Christian affection for the souls of these poor children; a mind which will not be content with a perfunctory discharge of duty, not even with remarkable success in the way of improving their intellects and reforming their outward habits; but a mind and soul which burns with love to Christ, and will be satisfied with nothing short of seeing these children converted and saved." Memoir, p. 452.

4 Guthrie makes numerous scattered allusions to this.

of heart."[1] He received letters from former students from many lands which bore "true and touching evidence of the influence of these schools on the eternal welfare of some of the scholars." Undoubtedly he was speaking from personal experience when, toward the end of his life and still pressing for such schools in London, he declared:

> What were the results of setting up such schools? You would send out thousands of children knowing something of God, of the value of their souls, of Jesus the Saviour of sinners; you would sow the seed of such religious instruction as might eventually spring up into eternal life. . . Yours might be the unspeakable comfort of knowing that you had saved thousands from death, and misery, and crime--saved them, perhaps, for the kingdom of heaven . . . It is a noble thing to save a life, but to save a soul is far nobler still; and I am happy to think that in these Ragged Schools not a few souls have been saved.[2]

Guthrie knew, as John Pounds had demonstrated, that those little slum Bedouins could never be induced to swallow an education until they had first swallowed food. His pastoral experience had taught him in no uncertain terms the futility of attempting to ladle spiritual nourishment into a soul housed in an undernourished body. He was sure that "if a man would reach the hearts of these people, he must not overlook their temporal necessities. And my business," he unconditionally said, "was to arrange matters that the bodies must be cared for, and the soul too."[3] For his ragged child-

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1 Memoir, p. 492.
2 The Poor and How to Help Them, p. 20.
3 Ibid., pp. 4, 5.

ren he demanded a full stomach as well as a full heart and head:

> We see no way of securing the amelioration and salvation of those . . . but by making their maintenance a bridge and a stepping stone to their education. . . The public may plant schools as thick as trees of the forest; but be assured, unless, besides being trees of knowledge . . . they are also bread-fruit trees, few of these children will seek their shadow.[1]

Twenty years after making that statement he emphasized the same thing before an Amsterdam audience: "Feed them with a bountiful meal of milk and porridge; and then prayers! Porridge first, mind; prayers afterwards."[2] His unique (and successful) formula for rearing children was: "Patience, Prayer, and Porridge." He illustrates the success of his method:

> One girl came to us more like a wild beast than a human being; she had never been under any authority before; her tattered gown had belonged to one twice her size and age; her eyes stared and rolled around like a startled hare's; she wore one of those old coal-scuttle bonnets, which looked as if it had been thirty years in pawn; and with her little withered face away at the back of that bonnet, she was a weird and wild-looking creature. In five weeks afterwards you could not have believed it to be the same girl. Treated kindly and as an intelligent, moral, human being, fed with three good meals . . . the angularities were all gone; her face was round as a turnip, and red as a rose.[3]

There were also other fruits. Laws were early passed to prohibit street-begging. The constabulary was instructed to apprehend offenders. "The police did their utmost," said

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1 First Plea, p. 8.
2 A.J. S., Thomas Guthrie, D.D., p. 193.
3 The Poor and How to Help Them, pp. 19-20.

Guthrie, "but these urchins were a-s ill to catch and to hold as eels. . . What cared these city Arabs for proclamations? not a straw."[1] Soon after his schools were started Guthrie was delighted "that people . . . have often remarked that . . the streets are much more clear of that class."[2] And twelve years after their founding he jubilantly (and perhaps over-optimistically?) announced:

> Now the juvenile beggars are all gone. The race is extinct. What has become of them? . . . They are off the streets and in our schools. . . If any now solicit charity, the answer is not money, or a rough repulse, or a curse, but**"Go to the Ragged School."[3]

One of the Association's objects was "to train them in habits of industry, by instructing and employing them daily in such sorts of work as are suited to their years."[4] The result of such training was that most of them became gainfully employed and did not need to beg. "I am willing to accompany any one," Guthrie offered, "to a few of the places where these children are employed, . . . and almost all giving satisfaction to their employers."[5]

Very early in his Edinburgh ministry he became "perfectly satisfied" that only through the youth could the low-

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1 Seed-Time and Harvest, p. 130.
2 Second Plea, p. 24.
3 Seed-Time and Harvest, p. 133.
4 Supplement to First Plea, p. 13.
5 Second Plea, p. 25. On one occasion Guthrie publicly took Australia's Attorney-General to task for referring to Ragged School children as "scum". Memoir, p. 495.

est classes be raised; and after fifteen years in the same parish, though he "would follow to his very grave the hoary-headed sinner," he was even more certain that childhood meant hope. He felt it to be "sheer, and utter, and egregious folly" to leave children with brutal parents: to do so meant to propagate their lawless kind. He proposed the simple, common-sense method which became his motto: "Prevention Better Than Cure."[1] He appealed to men's common-sense, "common interest, humanity, and Christianity" to prevent rather than punish crime. He pointed out that prisons rarely ever reformed criminals; instead, the young delinquent usually came from his cell fully developed for his nefarious trade. Guthrie was sure his schools would nip the potential criminal in the bud.

Such was the case. Although juvenile crime had steadily increased during the first seven years of the 1840's, the Govenor of Edinburgh's prison said that commitments of youngsters thirteen years of age and under had decreased fifty per cent within the first twelve months of Ragged School operations, and because of them.[2] The same year Sheriff Jameson (Edinburgh) spoke of how youth crimes had alarmingly increased in immediate past years, how he and other authorities were baffled by the problem, how jails failed "to deter or reform criminals"; but, he added, "I know of nothing which affords a

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1 The subtitle to the First Plea
2 The Witness, June 24, 1848.

more cheering prospect than the success of these schools."[1] The prison records clearly show the remarkable reverse in juvenile delinquency due to Ragged Schools.[2] In 1847 (year founded) children thirteen years of age and under represented 5.6% of total jail commitments; in 1848 this figure was reduced to 3.7%; 1849 to 2.9%; 1850, 1.3%; and 1851, 0.9%. These and other statistics from grateful authorities in Edinburgh and elsewhere were evidence of the efficacy of his motto, "Prevention Better Than Cure." Guthrie saw it thus:

> Look at the effect of our school on the prison! It is very remarkable. As the rooms of the school filled, the cells of the prison emptied. Our increase was their decrease, and it was plain to everybody that we had struck one great spring--and were draining it off.[3]

This fact afforded him much personal gratification:

> We have stayed the progress of crime. Leaving others to wear blood-stained laurels, and boast of thousands slain in battle, we esteem ourselves happier; we point to thousands plucked from the jaws of ruin and saved for society--not a few of them, we trust, for God and heaven.[4]

8. Appeals to the State:

Armed with the results of his schools he was persuaded it was time for the State, for its own welfare, to take

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1 Second Plea, appendix III, p. 57.
2 Daily Review, pp. 11-12. The criminal "source of supply" was thus cut. In 1848 those between 14 & 16 years of age in Edinburgh's prison numbered 552; in 1850 this number was reduced to 361; in 1858 to 138; and in 1868 to 52.
3 Seed-Time and Harvest, p. 155.
4 Ibid., p. 157.

them under its patronage. By 1850 they had been established, largely as a result of Guthrie's effective advocacy, in most of Britain's large towns, but their impact was necessarily limited due to their being supported solely by voluntary contributions. Thus, while keeping his hand firmly on the public's voluntary purse, in his Second Plea Guthrie proposed that the Government recognize the schools by materially augmenting their income. He reminded his voluntary supporters, however, that "it is not commonly the duty of a government to precede, but to follow the country," and therefore they would have to renew their efforts of support.

In 1850 he headed a deputation to London to interview Lord Lansdowne, President of the Privy Council, "in order to get a clause into the minutes of Council on Education, embracing our Ragged Schools, for the purpose [of] giving us aid out of the public funds."[1] The substance of his argument was that, aside from spiritual and humane rewards, from the "low level" of mere pecuniary considerations it were wise for the Government to invest twenty-five pounds in a Ragged School lad and thus prevent him from joining the criminal ranks, than to expend three hundred pounds (the average cost per prisoner) in punishing him as a miscreant. The Council was

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1 Memoir, p. 462. "One of my friends told me afterwards that I was sitting on a chair three times the breadth of this table away from [Lansdowne]; but that as I got on, I edged nearer and nearer till at last I was clapping him on the knee! I gave it to his lordship in a speech of nearly an hour, at which he seemed lost in astonishment." Ibid., p 463

highly impressed with his case, and he complied with their request that his recommendations be printed and sent to them.

In 1852, "largely as a result of the spirited efforts of Dr. Guthrie,"[1] a Parliamentary Committee made an investigation of the nation's destitute and delinquent juveniles. He gave extended and detailed evidence before this committee and it was "owing in large measure to the statistics Dr. Guthrie was ceaselessly collecting and fowarding to Lord Lansdowne"[2] that, in 1854, two Acts were passed (Lord Palmerston's and Dunlop's[3]), the one dealing with criminal children and the other with vagrant children. These Acts provided that magistrates could send both types of children to approved industrial schools, with the stipulation that parents must pay a partial amount of the cost.

It was a decided advance when in 1856 a grant of fifty shillings annually was made for every child in industrial schools, whether committed by magistrates or not. This boon to the movement (which immediately began to expand) was short-lived, however, the fifty shilling grant being reduced to five the following year. Guthrie was shocked and indignant: "Munificent donation! incredible mockery! what a monstruous state of matters!" he cried. He did what he always did when

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1 O. Smeaton, op. cit., p. 86.
2 Ibid., p. 87.
3 Dunlop was Guthrie's intimate friend and the principle mover behind Guthrie's move from Arbirlot to Edinburgh. See Memoir, pp. 143-44, 293 ff.

in difficulty: he took his case to the people by publishing his Third Plea for Ragged Schools.[1] His renewed Plea again stirred the nation's heart and met with enthusiastic acclaim. The London Times said that his Pleas . . .

> . . . are the most finished of his compositions, and are well worthy of his fame. It is impossible to read them unmoved. The writer himself is under the influence of a mastering passion, and he carries his readers along with him, by the help of a strong, clear style and a boundless store of illustrations.[2]

In 1859 he headed another deputation including "some twenty-one members of Parliament"[3] to prevail upon the Privy Council to reinstate the fifty shilling grant; but the mission was unsuccessful. Dunlop's Act was repealed in 1860, thus leaving the small five shilling grant for each criminal child committed to the schools under the Palmerston Act. He bitterly and scathingly denounced this action as miserly and foolhardy. Downing Street, he declared, was "a shocking cold place" where "good-hearted men" go into office only to come out "as hard as a stone."[4] Children of those in comfortable circumstances are educated largely at the expense of the country, he said, while his hapless, helpless outcasts get the smallest "niggardly pittance. It is a cruel injustice."[5] Why

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1 His Third Plea was combined with the first two Pleas and published as a single volume in 1860 under the title Seed-Time and Harvest for Ragged Schools.

2 London Times, September 28, 1860.

3 Memoir, p. 474.

4 Ibid., p. 478.

5 Seed-Time and Harvest, pp. 172-73.

should this be so? he challenged his countrymen:

> We cry, Make way, and clear a passage for us and our Ragged Schools. In a procession of beggars the rags should float in the van; and from the treasury of the country others may be supplied only after we are served.[1]

No doubt the law-makers felt the impact of these and other blows from their constituents. The following year (1861) the Industrial Schools Act was passed which, though it made no provision for non-committed children, "materially increased" funds for those committed to the schools by magistrates. The classification of "committed children" was widened in 1866 by allowing magistrates to sentence children to industrial schools for vagrancy and petty theft--a great financial gain for the schools for most of the children in their care came under such a classification.

9. National Education:

Guthrie was grateful for the recognition and help thus accorded his schools, but he could not rest content so long as thousands of children remained unreached by the existing educational system. Unless these children could be compelled, they would never attend school. His answer to this problem: national compulsory education.

Scotland had long proudly and justly marched in the vanguard of those nations doing most to educate her sons and

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1 Second Plea, p. 43. He suggested prisons should have over their doors: "Under Patronage of Privy Council."

daughters, but still there were always the unreached. For instance, in the middle of the eighteenth century the Presbytery of Ayr had twelve parishes with no schools; and in the Highlands there were one hundred and seventy-five parishes with neither school nor schoolmaster.[1] During the first thirty or forty years of the nineteenth century education was in such a "state of affairs" that "the majority of our citizens were unable to read and write."[2] In 1867 one-sixth of all Scotland's children attended no school,[3] while prior to 1872 "many persons even in highly educated Scotland could be found who were not so much as able to write their own names."[4]

Guthrie was one of the first prominent advocates of a compulsory national school system. "I hold it to be a primary duty of the State," he maintained, "to see that every child within its bounds is educated, and that no parent be allowed to bring up their children in savage, dangerous ignorance."[5] He said this was necessary for the good of the child, for the good of the lowest classes from which he came and for the good of society as a whole.

Guthrie's catholic sympathies recoiled from the selfish bickerings and cant of parties and denominations which, he felt, were obstructing the way to such a desirable goal.

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1 H.F. Henderson, op. cit., p. 97.
2 J.G. Kerr, A Scotsman's Heritage, p. 69.
3 R. Mackie, op. cit., p. 403.
4 H.F. Henderson, op. cit., p. 98.
5 Seed-Time and Harvest, p. 175.

To these folk he spoke publicly and plainly. What, he asked, did their narrow points of contention and their unseemly wrangling matter when thousands of nameless wretches thronged the alleys in fierce, unlettered savagery?[1] A newspaper report says that on one occasion, when speaking before a great public meeting on education, the thought flashed across his mind that the Free Church had been accused of supporting a certain bill for sectarian reasons, . . .

> . . . when he suddenly broke off his argument, and, with tears running down his cheeks, exclaimed, "What care I for the Free Church, or any Church upon earth, in comparison with my desire to save and bless those poor children of the High Street!" An intelligent auditor afterwards said of this exclamation, "It was as though a shock of electricity had passed through the audience."[2]

Guthrie always struck straight to the heart of things! And this is the advice which he offered Parliament in dealing with the educational bill so much in dispute:

> I hope Parliament will disregard the different views regarding the Bill entertained by different bodies, and the empty cries that are raised against it, and will consider only, whether this Bill is or is not contrary to the Word of God and the good of society.[3]

Though the hard crust of sectarianism was reluctant to yield, and the "coldness" of governmental authority was slow to thaw, Guthrie was certain that the soundness and necessity of national compulsory education would slowly but relentless-

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1 A.J.S., op. cit., pp. 62-4.
2 Edinburgh Daily News, February 25, 1874.
3 A.J.S., op. cit., p. 65.

ly push these and other barriers aside. In 1866 he predicted a national system within twenty-five years.[1] In 1867, under the shadow of Westminster, he declared that though Parliament needed reforming, the greatest Reform Bill would be passed when that body passed a law making an education mandatory for every child within the realm. In 1868 his optimism mounted: "Although I am no prophet, or prophet's son," he nevertheless prophecied, "within a very short time I see a system of education established throughout the whole of this country."[2] He was correct. The National Education Act of 1872, embodying nearly all for which he had long contended, compeling the ratepayers in each parish "to build schools large enough to receive all the children of school age,"[3] and forcing all parents, whatever their station, to send their children,[4] was passed.

It was not the intent of the Act of 1872 to absorb or otherwise eliminate the Ragged School movement; rather, it effectively increased aid to them. Guthrie had previously expected a national system "that will not shut up the Ragged Schools, but will open up many a Ragged School, and embrace the whole children of the country."[5] Such was the case. As

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1 Memoir, p. 482.
2 Loc. cit.
3 R. Mackie, op. cit., p. 403.
4 P. Hume Brown, A History of Scotland for Schools, p. 574.
5 Memoir, p. 482.

long as there were children devoid of the commonest principles of Christian morality, Ragged Schools would have their important place. To underscore this unique function of his schools, Thomas Guthrie, less than two months before his death, took up his pen once again, and for the last time, to plead his "Arabs'" cause:

> Will the friends of those who are "ready to perish" . . . allow me from my sick-bed to close the year with what will probably be my closing plea . . .?
> . . . . . .
> This Education Act . . . will place our Ragged Schools in a new position, but not render them nor their Christian machinery less necessary than before. Local Boards, however well constituted, and the ordinary teachers of schools can never supply the place of those Christian men and women who . . . in our Ragged Schools, are in loco parentis--in room of kind Christian parents--to those children. I hope some arrangement will be come to between the local boards and our Ragged Schools, whereby, while the State shall sweep all neglected children into these schools and compel parents to pay for them, . . . they may continue to be managed under those same moral and religious influences in which they had their origin, and to which they have chiefly owed their remarkable success.[1]

10. The Sympathetic Heart:

Why was Thomas Guthrie so consumingly concerned with the welfare of others? Why was his name, as was said, "synonymous with philanthropy"? If we cannot know all the answers we can nevertheless discern some of them. Even a casual acq-uaintance with this personality teaches that he was a man

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1 Ibid., p. 483. Supra 82, footnote #3, for the type of Christian teacher Guthrie required for his schools.

with an expansive, warm and generous heart--and it was his heart more than his head that directed his life. "He was the philanthropist born, not made," one of his biographers said.[1] Engrained in the very nature of this Scottish preacher was an intense love and genuine affection for people--all people, high and low--a sympathy which identified him with them as, as he himself often said, "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh." This was no superficial or merely outward characteristic of the man; it was his life, it colored his thought, it shaped his ministry, it flowed through his pen and trembled with tender emotion or thundered with righteous indignation from his pulpit and the platform; it was vibrant with life and contagious in its impelling enthusiasm. "His generosity was not of the sentimental but of the genuine character; he had not only a heart, but his heart was in the right place."[2] The Brechin school-bully felt "Tammy's" wrath at the same time the timid weakling received his protection. Thereafter the over-bearing strong and the helpless weak were always the objects of his condemnation on the one hand and his compassion on the other. Lord Guthrie was impressed with this facet of his father's character:

Lord Cockburn truly ascribed my father's power to his

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1 O. Smeaton, op. cit., p. 84.
2 A statement by President McCosh of Princeton College, Memoir, p. 269.

> passion and compassion. . . He was filled with an intense sympathy for suffering humanity, and a burning desire to alleviate, if he could not remove, its wrongs and woes.[1]

It was this intense sympathy which identified him with the sufferer (or others) and permitted him to "experience" the misery (or joy) of the objects of his sympathy--an ability the psychologists call "empathy". And it was this that he called upon his hearers or readers to "go and do thou likewise", to be honest enough to put themselves into the predicaments which his graphic presentations set before them.

His warm sympathy was bridled and guided by a practical realism. His distinguished friend, Robert Candlish, remarked that if Guthrie was a pulpit master, he was more:

> The warm heart was his and the ready hand; the heart to feel and the hand to work. No sentimental dreamer or mooning idealist was he. His pity was ever active. Tears he had, but also far more than tears, for all who needed sympathy and help. His graphic pictures of the scenes of misery he witnessed were inspired by no idle dreamy philosophy after the fashion of Sterne or Rousseau, but by a human love for all human beings, intensely real and vigorously energetic.[2]

Unmistakably the heart of the man was the great source of his philanthropic out-reach. "He laboured much because he loved much those whom no other heart loved so well and with whom no other worker sympathised in equal degree."[3] Especially was this true in his relations with little children. Here his "passion and compassion" found its keenest expression.

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1 C.J. Guthrie, op. cit., p. 15.
2 Daily Review, p. 33. Quotation from a sermon.
3 O. Smeaton, op. cit., p. 90.

"Every child in your starving districts," he reminded his city, "cold and hungry and poor, is an innocent sufferer. These have the first claim on your kindness, they are not guilty."[1] Guthrie proclaimed that message everywhere, and "when the mighty voice was silent and the great heart stilled . . ., the destitute children of Edinburgh lost a friend whose like their class will never see again."[2]

11. The Patriotic Heart:

One principle purpose of his Second Plea was to rouse his nation to what he conceived to be the imminent danger inherent in her vast mass of poverty, immorality and ignorance. Guthrie was a staunch Scotsman, but he was a greater Briton. He loved his nation, her system of government, her institutions and her Queen. The ominous portent residing within the undisciplined evil of the lowest classes which he knew so well, filled him with anxiety for the welfare of both Queen and country. Thus he warned:

> We are no alarmists, nor of those who attempt to read the mysteries of letters on the scroll of prophecy; but there are signs of storms in the sky; and since, sooner than many suppose, the rain may descend . . . it is well to look to our foundations . . . and strengthen them.[3]

He called upon citizens and public authorities alike to awake to the menace and danger of the unredressed wrongs

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1 The Poor and How to Help Them, p. 14.
2 O. Smeaton, op. cit., p. 90.
3 Second Plea, p. 45.

of laborers and the poor, he declared that the government had need to act at once in these matters, he warned that unless remedial measures were taken with all haste "this noble empire shall fall one day like some mighty and splendid iceberg" undermined by the sinister underworkings of the sea.[1] He proposed to meet this situation by bringing to light,to evils long obscured the exposure that would arouse a Christian people to take steps toward their positive elimination. "We deem it no extravagance to say," were his words, "that the very being of this noble empire is bound up with this [Ragged Schools] and other kindred schemes."[2]

12. The Christian Heart:

Most of Guthrie's predecessors, and many of his contemporaries in the Church, saw no necessary correlation between the Faith and philanthropy; or if they did, they were so absorbed in the blood-less speculation of the one that the other received scant attention. Before the "Age of Reform"[3] (1830-1870) we are told that . . .

> . . . all those pressing social obligations which every one now recognises to be included among the services of the Christian Church were kept severely in the background, other fundamental questions claimed priority of settlement, questions of creed and theology, quest-

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1 Ibid., pp. 48-9.
2 Ibid., p. 44.
3 Woodward, The Age of Reform 1830-1870.

ions of anthropology and soteriology.[1]

To Guthrie such a religion was, to say the least, a whited sepulcher, and it was most certainly foreign, if not repugnant, to his own vital faith. As Moderator of the General Assembly he told a Liverpool audience that "nothing could be more in harmony with my profession, or my religion" than pleading and working for the cause of the oppressed. "If I have a grain of wisdom," he continued, "this is a season for ministers to come down from the heights of doctrine to the field of practical duties, and proclaim trumpet-tongued, from every pulpit in the land, God Almighty's great fast . . ."[2] To him, in fact, attending to the needs of his brethren was the very highest form of worship:

> If I could not both preach and feed the hungry, If I could not be both in the house of prayer and in the house of suffering, I believe, Sir, that God would be more pleased to see me in the house of the poor than in His own; wiping the tear from the cheek of sorrow than weeping before Him; not bringing my oil and wine to His altar but, like the good Samaritan, stooping over a fallen brother to pour them into his bleeding wounds. Mercy is better than sacrifice.[3]

Behind this indissoluble faith-works relationship was his pervading sense of mission, a certainty that God had chosen him for such a time and for such a work. "It so happened in the providence of God," he asserted, . . .

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1 H.F. Henderson, op. cit., p. 159.
2 Bear Ye One Another's Burdens, pp. 6-7.
3 Ibid., p. 11. See thesis chapter, "Religious Thought" sections dealing with "Faith" and "Works".

> . . . I was called . . . to occupy, as my charge, one of the most wretched and degraded districts in Edinburgh. In God's mysterious providence I was sent to the Cowgate and Grassmarket of Edinburgh to prepare myself for that work in Ragged Schools and other such schemes that I have been honoured to do.[1]

Convinced of this he looked to God to overcome every difficulty, including those which were declared "hopeless". He protested that there was no such thing as a "hopeless" man or woman:

> "Behold," says God, in answer to those unbelieving and paralysing fears, "behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save . . ." The disease of the body and the delirium of the head may baffle the skill of man; but that man never walked this world whom God's gospel, with God's blessing, could not cure and convert.[2]

While willing and anxious to use every practical means at his command, he looked ultimately behind the method to a higher Power for lasting results. "I lend my countenance (such as it is) to such expedients as, offering some remedy for our clamant evils, are auxiliary to the gospel in which alone I trust for permanent good."[3] He "maintained that without the work of God in the soul, bringing men back to himself by Jesus Christ, the pillars of a nation are rottenness, and its foundations stubble."[4] Christ was at once the pattern and power of his life, and he longed for others to share the glory of this most satisfying of relationships. He was a philanthropist be-

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1 The Poor and How to Help Them, p. 4.
2 Address at the Opening of St. John's Church, pp. 8-9.
3 Popular Innocent Entertainments, p. 13.
4 John Cairns, Thomas Guthrie as an Evangelist, p. 10.

cause he was a Christian, a man in Christ who was unable to comprehend how a man could call himself Christ's without "going about doing good." It was his great joy to show forth Christ by caring for those whom Christ cares for. "He unfolded the utmost consideration for the physical necessities of men, but always in subordination to the higher wants of the soul. His love extended to the whole man--body and soul together. His love to God and his love to man were not two passions, but one. He loved man because he saw God in him--God's handiwork, God's image, the object of God's love."[1] The following appeal serves to demonstrate this fact.

> We entreat you to turn an eye of piety and of pity on these unhappy children. These miserable creatures are the children of our common Father--members of our common family. Man of humanity, they are thy brothers and sisters --bone of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh: their hard and melancholy lot may be thy crime--it cannot be their own. Sinner, they are thy fellows! in them see an emblem of thy state when thou wast an outcast, too, lying in thy blood, and a God of mercy passing by, looked on thee, and said, "Live". Christian, they were pitied by thy dying Lord: for them as well as for thee, He bled, and groaned, and breathed His last on Calvary; and both of and for such He said, "Suffer little children to come unto me."
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> Parents, you who know a father's and a mother's heart, look on these helpless outcasts, and thank God, who maketh one to differ from another, that their afflicted and affecting lot is not that of your more fortunate offspring; and as you smile on your sweet and merry children and see their pleasant faces beaming round your replenished board or cheerful fire--as you bless their heads, and hear their hymns, and kiss them to their warm couch of rest--surely you will not refuse a tear, a prayer, a contribution, for those, many of whom know a parent's

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1 J. Stalker, Imago Christi, p. 205. The quotation refers to Jesus, but humbly applied to Guthrie here.

curses, but never knew a Christian parent's care.

To God, in whose hands are the hearts of all men, in whose promises we trust, and whose blessing we implore, we commend this cause. May He who out of the mouth of babes and sucklings ordaineth strength, give effect to this appeal, and crown our labours with such divine success, that they may be instrumental, not only in saving many now lost to society, but in bringing many to Jesus, the Saviour of souls; and so, in their best, highest, and holiest sense, realizing the words of the parable,-- "This, my son, was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."[1]

13. Philanthropic Influence:

It would have been most extraordinary indeed if a man of Guthrie's unusual personality, energy and popularity had not exerted a widespread influence upon the contemporary philanthropic life of his times. In point of fact, his influence was great not only in his own but in other lands as well. His works were widely read in America, the Dominions and Colonies, in Europe and upon the mission fields. During the last ten years of his life he made several trips to the Continent where he was in demand as a speaker--especially upon his favorite theme, Ragged Schools. Men of high rank and prominence became his loyal friends and co-workers in all of his benevolent enterprizes.[2] For example, Lord Jeffrey wrote to him: "I have long considered you and Dr. Chalmers as the two great

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1 Second Plea, p. 50.

2 Among them: Thackery, Carlyle, Ruskin, Wilberforce, the Duke and Duchess of Argyll, the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, Lord Shaftesbury, Dean Stanley, Lord Cockburn, Fox Lord Panmure, the Earl of Dalhousie, and others.

benefactors of your age and country, and admired and envied you beyond all your contemporaries; though far less for your genius and eloquence, than for the noble uses to which you have devoted these gifts, and the good you have done by the use of them."[1] In England, Gladstone, long his devoted friend, speaking before Parliament on his Light Wines Bill, defended his stand by saying, "I have found a testimony which is entitled to great weight, coming from a man pledged by his sacred profession, eminent for his eloquence, distinguished and beloved for his virtues--Dr. Guthrie."[2] Away in India the renowned missionary, Alexander Duff, wrote to Guthrie in 1849:

> The whole of your remarkable career during the last few years I have been following with intense delight. Your Manse scheme and Ragged School have been bulking before my mind's eye in a way to fill me with wonder, ay and devout gratitude to the God of heaven, for having so extraordinarily blessed your efforts.[3]

His contemporaries were unrestrained in their evaluation and praise of his work and influence. Indeed, in the words of Candlish, "his efforts in every work of benevolence . . . have made his name synonymous with philanthropy."[4]

Guthrie felt that he lived in an age remarkable for "the expansive and comprehensive character of its benevolence." But it was not always so. At the beginning of his Edinburgh ministry people of rank, responsibility and wealth

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1 Quoted by C.J. Guthrie, op. cit., p. 21.
2 Memoir, footnote, p. 584.
3 Ibid., p. 532.
4 Quoted by A.J.S., op. cit., p. 177.

were notoriously apathetic towards the sufferings of the poverty-stricken lower classes. It is here that Guthrie comes foward with distinction as a philanthropist.

In him two qualities combined to fit him pre-eminently for his place. On the one hand he possessed the heart, mind and experience which enabled him to recognize and feel the dire need for ameliorating the circumstances of the poor; and, on the other hand, standing high in the public's esteem, loved and respected by every class and creed, his was the genius that both by pen and from the platform and pulpit, could move the populace to effective action. It is important that these two qualifications met in the one man. Many another person in Guthrie's time was stirred deeply by the rotten degradation patently evident even to the casual observer; but lacking the ability to draw forth the public's heart, will and resources, they were doomed to the disappointing and circumscribed work of individual effort. There were also those who had the people's ear but, for reasons of their own, left this particular work to others. Guthrie combined the two: he saw and felt and was moved by what he saw with the heart of a city missionary (which he was for ten years before addressing the public on the subject), and he was able in his own peculiar way to shatter the prevailing lethargy and callousness and at the same time channel the new-found power thus tapped into concerted philanthropic endeavor.

> The wonderful success which attended his exertions was an index of the depth of the impressions he had created in the minds of others. These impressions themselves indicated the tide of feeling which had hurried himself along. . . The power of Dr. Guthrie to originate motion --to set others athinking, agoing, and to communicate impetus--was very great.[1]

In none of the many and widely varied schemes with which his name has been prominently associated was Guthrie the originator or founder. In this sense--that of creating a new movement of social reform--Guthrie would receive no claim to prominence. His originality lay in this: that where others had conceived the idea, had drawn the rough plans and had broken the ground but were unable to bring their project to wide fruition, Guthrie was quick and keen to see the possibilities of their efforts and, giving credit to the initiators, was able to launch the otherwise floundering scheme on a favorable wave of public enthusiasm which never subsided so long as he espoused the cause. In this his originality was real and significant.

"What an electrical impulse," said Cairns, "has this great Christian philanthropist . . . shot through the heart of the Christian Church from one end of the world to the other!"[2] Dr. Robertson of Greyfriars Church opened a parish destitute school before Guthrie began his campaign. Said Dr. Robertson: "Dr. Guthrie has done more than any living man

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1 Rev. George Philip in Daily Review, p. 36.
2 John Cairns, op. cit., p. 9.

to lift from the very gutter of wretchedness and vice"[1] the children of the poor. Such, it may be said, was the universal expression of his times. And it was a great comfort to him to know that his work had met with no small measure of success:

> I never engaged in a cause a-s a man and as a Christian minister, that I believe on my death-bed I will look back on with more pleasure or gratitude to God, than that He led me to work for Ragged Schools. I have the satisfaction, when I lay my head upon my pillow, of always finding one soft spot of it: and that is, that God has made me an instrument in His hand of saving many a poor creature from a life of misery and crime.[2]

But with all his public acclamation, renown and success he seems to have remained humbly conscious of his own imperfections and work still unfinished:

> I am sensible that . . . I have come short of my duty. I look to God's mercy and a Saviour's merits for forgiveness of my defects and infirmities, and for heaven's blessings on my poorest efforts to promote the cause of religion, the present welfare and eternal well-being of those who are "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh."[3]

Thus Thomas Guthrie takes his place in the van of those Christian philanthropists whose works live after them, The years have passed, but Edinburgh's man-in-the-street when asked, can still identify him as "the philanthropist"; his schools, steadily progressing and expanding, continue to care for the outcast waif with their founder's Christian solicitude; his nobly impressive statue, depicting him with a Bible

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1 Quoted in the Daily Review, p. 41.
2 Report of Ragged School Conference, Birmingham, 1861, p. 66.
3 Popular Innocent Entertainments, p. 15.

in one hand and the other protectingly resting upon the shoulders of a ragged lad, looks down upon the famous Princes Street as though he were still asking, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?"[1] In the annals of Christian philanthropy, Thomas Guthrie will take a high place, and that, if for no other reason, for being the preacher with the burning heart--a heart touched with an almost mother-like compassion for his fellow-man which glowed with a passionate determination to expend itself for their welfare. Nor did his heart burn in vain. That inward fire which refused him rest, refused also to be confined; it would not be denied until the very heart of the nation kindled into a warmth of human benevolence such as the land had never known before. Here he is surpassed by the very choicest few, if at all. Like a torch dropped here and there in the dry grasses of the open plains, he went about igniting fires of good-will which, springing to life wherever he went, burned and spread until the whole had been covered in a noble altruistic conflagration. To whom more than himself could his own words be more appropriately applied?

> "He burns with a noble and divine ambition
> who aims at leaving this world better than
> he found it."[2]

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1 Statue gifted to Edinburgh by his son Alexander in 1910 and unveiled before "thousands of spectators" by Lord Balfour. It shows him in "striking and successful fashion" in his likeness and work. R.L. Orr, op. cit., pp. 268-69.

2 Second Plea, p. 14.

The

RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

of

THOMAS GUTHRIE

"I admit nothing to be of vital importance
but a genuine, heaven-born faith."

Thomas Guthrie

CHAPTER III

RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

The theological climate in the Church of Scotland made a decided change at the beginning of the nineteenth century. For the greater part of the previous century the prevailing thought and dominant influence within the Church had been that of what was known as the Moderate party led by such men as Hutcheson, Carlyle, Robertson and Blair. Gaining places of importance and influence, the Moderate party held the affairs of the Church under its patronage with a high hand. Members of this group looked down upon the evangelical zeal and enthusiasm of their fathers and some of their contemporaries as a kind of barbarism which an enlightened age should not tolerate. They were men of wide culture and learning, with outstanding gifts in the fields of literature and philosophy which formed not only the chief characteristic of their lives but of their preaching also. Their interest lay not in theology, doctrine and dogma, especially that of traditional Calvinism, but rather in preaching and living the "good life" of cultured intellectualism and ethical moralism.[1]

Opposed to the Moderates, yet dominated by them in the Church's courts, were the Evangelicals who struggled to keep

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1 Henry Grey Graham, The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century, II, 148.

alive the Reformed faith as it had come down to them by way of the seventeenth century Scottish Covenanters.

> The Popular men [Evangelicals] were rigidly Calvinistic, giving prominence to the doctrines of election and irresistible grace; the Moderates, if not Arminians, at least kept out of view the peculiar principles of Calvinism. The former dwelt much upon the doctrines of Christianity, and especially justification by faith; the latter insisted mainly upon the keeping of the commandments. They had a peculiar fondness for sermons upon sympathy, good-will, benevolence, honesty, and all the other cardinal virtues.[1]

With the passing of the eighteenth century with her outstanding Moderate leaders, the back of that party's dominance was broken. A new era in the life of the Church of Scotland was ushered in with the new century. Moderatism had lost its hold on the people, to be replaced in their affections by the long-suppressed Evangelicals who found new and capable leaders in Andrew Thomson and, later, Thomas Chalmers. With the change in religious outlook came also an interest and activity in the field of foreign missions never known before in the Scottish Church--and Alexander Duff, who was sent to India, stands as a symbol of this new enthusiasm. A fervid and thoroughly evangelical religious revival swept the land fanned on by the Haldane brothers and Rowland Hill and indicative of the new spirit of the new age.[2] "The star of Moderate ascendency in the Church of Scotland passed its zenith

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1 W. Cunningham, Church History, II, 413.
2 Ibid., op. cit., p. 443.

about the close of the eighteenth century."[1]

Thomas Guthrie was born at the time Moderatism died. The party as a party continued to live, but it bore little resemblance to the power that had sat at the helm of the Church for well over a half century. Between the Moderates and the Evangelicals doctrinal differences virtually ceased to exist. Their distinction became one of polity rather than doctrine--a difference which revolved around the question of Patronage and which finally led to the Disruption of 1843. Theologically, by the great majority at least, the Calvinism of the Westminster Standards was replaced to its old position in the Church by the hands of both Moderates and Evangelicals.[2]

By the time Guthrie became an ordained minister, evangelical Calvinism was generally and popularly the religious thought of the day. From the time when he sat under the orthodox Secession teaching at his mother's feet until he retired from the active ministry, he never had to battle a single cross-current of doctrinal adversity (which may or may not have upset or modified the placid flow of his religious life) throughout his ministry. The first sermon he ever preached was described by one who heard it as "solid, evangelical doctrine."[3] And so it was, and the student of Guthrie

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1 W.G. Blaikie, Preachers of Scotland, p. 268.

2 A.J. Campbell, Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland, pp. 163-96. J.R. Fleming, op. cit., p. 7.

3 Memoir, p. 223. Preached in 1825 at Dun. Reprinted in the 2 vol. edition of the Autobiography and Memoir, Appendix, I, 409.

finds the identical doctrine throughout his mature works.

This is not to say, however, that his theology was not his own. Whatever the initial source of his Calvinism, the charge could never justly be laid to him that he merely parroted the thoughts of others. He admitted a great indebtedness to Calvin, Luther and their disciples, but rarely did he quote any of his distinguished predecessors as his authority for statements made. It is from the Bible and his own experience that his sermons are drawn, and if he held to a strict orthodoxy, which he did, it was an orthodoxy warmed (and not "warmed over") by his own heart and convictions and peculiarly expressed in his benevolent outlook and activity. To the great evangelical doctrines he held with tenacious certainty, a fact which prompted Lord Cockburn to remark that he was "perhaps the least illiberal of clergymen."[1] It was also for this reason that Theodore Tilton, the American Unitarian, was led to make a statement which Guthrie would probably have thought the highest of compliments:

> Guthrie was a hidebound theologian, and something of a bigot. But, for all that, this noble and consecrated Scot stood in his pulpit a king of men, an ambassador of God, a lover of his race, a blessing to his country and an honour to his time. He was a brave old Christian hero; and the recollection of his life and labour fills even my heretical heart with gratitude.[2]

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1 Henry Cockburn, Journal, II, 174.

2 Quoted by C.J. Guthrie in the "Memoir" of Guthrie's The Parables of Our Lord, p. xx.

Guthrie once said, "Though not a theologian, I am surely a competent witness" as to when the gospel is "fully and faithfully preached."[1] Just so. He was not being overly modest in admitting he was no "great theologian". He was not and never claimed to be a theologian in the systematic sense of that term. His religious thought was practical, objective and utilitarian, but never scholarly. He never indulged himself in an analysis of the subconscious or with speculations concerning the inner life of the human soul. These things, he felt, added nothing to the faith once delivered to the saints of God. He contended that the only new light that may yet open new vistas on the Faith would come from scientists rather than theologians, and that only by substantiating statements already revealed in the Scriptures.[2] It is not to be expected, therefore, in this study of his religious thought that we shall find that he made a "contribution" to matters theological, or that what he believed was in any way new or unique. Guthrie's peculiar contributions lay elsewhere.

His remark, "I admit nothing to be of vital importance but a genuine, heaven-born faith,"[3] speaks volumes of his doctrinal position and attitude. A "genuine, heaven-born

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1 An Unspoken Speech for Union, p. 8.
2 Speaking to the Heart, pp. 74-5, 77-8.
3 Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints, p. 330.

faith" meant a child-like acceptance of the cardinal tenets of evangelical Protestantism. Thus, though there would certainly be mysteries in the Christian faith, there would never be absolutely fundamental difficulties. Faith would absorb all problems. Those who busied themselves with trying to explain or reconcile seemingly conflicting doctrines--justification by faith and justification by works, election and the Gospel's universal offer, God's decrees and man's free will--were wasting their time. It is ours, he said, to declare God's whole counsel however conflicting component parts of that counsel may seem.[1] The origin of sin, for example, does not give him concern because he is too busy saving himself and others, because he has neither the time nor the talent for such speculation, because the deeper one goes into such mysteries the darker it gets, and because such theorizing can easily be postponed to the leisure of eternity. The fact of sin leaves one with but a single problem, "What must I do to be saved?"[2]

As the very conservative Principal Macleod said of Guthrie's theology: "It was fundamentally a Calvinistic kind of Evangelism that might be looked for as the message of the Scottish pulpit."[3]

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1 Our Father's Business, pp. 224-27.
2 Ezekiel, pp. 83-4.
3 John Macleod, Scottish Theology, p. 295.

I. CONCERNING THE BIBLE

Guthrie said that as a child the only books his family owned which were "interesting to young minds" were the Pilgrim's Progress and the Bible. From those early days until his last day the Bible remained not only the most interesting but by far the most important of all books. He tells us why.

1. Inspiration:

He held uncompromisingly to what he called "the divine authority of the Bible." Every word of it is as though God Himself were speaking to the reader. It is true that "it flowed along human channels, yet its origin was more than celestial--it was divine. Those waters . . . while conveyed to man through the instrumentality of man, have their source far away--in the throne of God. Their fountainhead is the Godhead."[1] The Apostle John, for instance, was "a pen in the hand of inspiration . . . It was not he, but God himself"[2] who wrote the words we have today. Nor does the character of the writer whether good or bad, add or detract:

> The Epistles of Paul had been as much the Gospel without his name as with it. It is the Will . . . not the man of business who wrote it, about which the heirs are concerned. The vices of the writer do not vitiate a good Will, nor do his virtues make a bad one good. And so it is with the Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ. The vir-

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1 Ezekiel, pp. 8-9.
2 Ibid., p. 64. (Italics added)

> tue of the Gospel does not lie either in the penman who wrote it or in the preachers who proclaim it.[1]

When God spoke to His chosen writers He did so so clearly that actually all they needed to do was play the part of a scribe. Such was the case with Moses "on the day when the Israelites of old stood at the foot of Sinai, and heard the very voice of God addressing them from the summit . . ."[2]

This direct communication of God with man has preserved a "pure, unpolluted fountain" of truth for His people "without defect or admixture of error."[3] We are not to infer, however, that the English version of the original is thus without spot or blemish. On the contrary:

> Our version of the Bible . . . is not faultless. It cannot be so, for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" . . . But could I form a better wish than that the errors of our heart and life were as insignificant as those that have been detected in our English Bible; and that Christians . . . were a s faithful copies of Jesus Christ, as it is of the divine original?[4]

The critics and foes of the Bible have done all they can to pull down this bulwark of the faith. Every part and particle of it has been attacked, "and with the same result: . . . our religion has come out of a thousand fights unscarred, from a thousand fires unscathed."[5] Why bother to refute contemporary attacks which have answered time and again?--

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1 Guthrie, "Memoir of Coutts", Coutts' Sermons, pp. 8-9.
2 Sundays Abroad, p. 265. (Italics added).
3 The Parables, p. 176.
4 Speaking to the Heart, p. 109.
5 Characters, I, 26-7, 149-50.

"to refute them be to slay the slain." These "infidels corrupted by Voltaire and others" have already been "ignominiously defeated" time without number, and their present offspring are only the "dregs of society."[1]

Science, in perfect harmony with God's Word, supports its statements and illuminates as it substantiates it. There is no place where science and the Bible are at variance. But should they be so, then science's claims "should not have the weight of a feather against the historical, the external and internal, the miraculous and prophetical evidences"[2] supporting the Bible's claims. The Bible and science, however, walk hand in hand.

2. Authority:

Being God's pure and unpolluted Word, Guthrie held that the Bible was therefore the only infallible rule of faith and practice. His concept of Authority is revealed in his "Paris Journal" in which he records an interview with a French priest. In a doctrinal argument the priest . . .

> . . . began some rigmarole story about Mother Church, to which I replied that I did not give a fig for the opinions of Mother Church, nor for any other body of fallible men, and that my only authority was [the Bible]. Holding out the Bible to him, "Prove," said I, "the doctrine from the words of Divine Revelation, and I will believe it." . . . I fixed my eye steadily upon him, and said, "Behold, Monsieur, the only authority which I acknow-

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1 Loc. cit.
2 Ibid., p. 153.

ledge."[1]

The Christian faith "flows unadulterated and undefiled, fresh and pure as it came from the upper spring. Let us draw it at this well--not taking our faith from man or minister, but directly from the Word of God."[2] No man should accept any matter of faith, whether the creeds of the churches, the writings of the venerable Fathers or the doctrines of brilliant theologians, without exercising their "right and duty" to test these matters by the Scriptures whether they be so.

Every area of life comes under the Bible's rule. It is a perfect code of morals adapted to all ages, circles of society of all nations; it is the one rule that will never fail or change. Words fail to express the practical worth of this gift from God. It is "par excellence, the Bible, or the Book, as if there were no other; because, while older, truer, better than any other book it surpasses them all in value."[3] And what is this practical value?

> Apart from its divine authority, there is more glowing eloquence, more noble sentiments, more melting pathos, more beautiful poetry, within its boards than anywhere else. From its pages moralists have borrowed their noblest maxims, and poets their finest thoughts. What can be said of no other has been well, and justly, and beautifully said of this--it has God for its author, truth without any mixture of error for its matter, and salvation for its end. The Bible has done more to bless society, to promote brotherhood, commerce, happiness, peace, and

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1 Memoir, p. 238.
2 Man and the Gospel, pp. 77-8.
3 "True Wisdom", Sunday Magazine, January 1, 1868.

> liberty in the world, than any other book, and all other books together. . . The wealth of the poor, by blessing them with that contentment which makes poverty rich, it is also the shield of wealth--protecting the few that are rich against the many that are poor. Wondrous book! it levels all, and yet leaves variety of ranks; it humbles the lofty, and exalts the lowliest; it condemns the best, and yet saves the worst; it engages the study of angels, and is not above the understanding of a little child; it shews us man raised to the position of a son of God, and the Son of God stooping to the condition of man. It heals by wounding, and kills to make alive. It is an armoury of heavenly weapons, a laboratory of infallible medicines, a mine of exhaustless wealth. Teaching kings how to reign and subjects how to obey, masters how to rule and domestics how to serve, pastors how to preach and people how to hear, teachers how to instruct and pupils how to learn, husbands how to love their wives and wives how to obey their husbands, it contains rules for men in all possible conditions of life. It is a guidebook for every road; a chart for every sea; a medicine for every malady; a balm for every wound; and a comfort for every grief. . . Rob us of the Bible, and our sky has lost its sun; and in other, even in the best of other books, we have nought left but the glimmer of stars.[1]

3. Interpretation:

Guthrie's mode of interpreting the Bible is as simple, direct and literal as possible. As the purpose of the Bible is to enlighten unto salvation, it is to be expected that "all that is necessary to know to be saved, it is easy to know." This is apparent by the "unlettered thousands", little children, and even imbeciles who have savingly found Christ in the "simple Bible."[2]

The Scriptures are composed of history and prophecy

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1 The Way to Life, pp. 102-104. A typical way in which Guthrie expresses a "view" on a subject.

2 Saving Knowledge, pp. 190-93.

(and all prophecy will one day become history) expressed in prose and poetry. God has taken care that His record be so clearly set forth that there are no real problems or difficulties to an adequate understanding of it. Being God's Book it must of necessity contain divine mysteries and . . .

> . . . it is ever to be borne in mind, that while the Gospel has shallows through which a child may wade to heaven, it has also deep, dark, unfathomed pools, which no eye can penetrate, and where the first step takes a giant beyond his depth.[1]

Therefore our concern is with the revealed and not the concealed, the revealed standing out like "stupendous crags and peaks which, crowned with snow and bathed in sunshine, pierce the skies [with] many grand views."

The rules of interpretation make it manifest that a literal interpretation is limited in at least one respect.[2] The Bible is full of pictures, symbols and parables which must be approached and understood as symbolic, nor ever allowed to be twisted and distorted into teaching that which they were never intended to teach. The parables, for instance, are often grossly mishandled by investing every detail of the story with significance. These stories were meant to teach one or two great truths for which the details serve as background.[3] But the devout mind can and should see many "types"

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1 Ezekiel, p. 2.
2 The Parables, p. 13. He speaks of such rules but mentions none but the one here considered.
3 Ibid., pp. 6-8. However, he gives significance to every character & place in the Good Samaritan. Ibid, p. 95-6.

of the Christian dispensation in the Old Testament which are not only instructive but edifying. The whole story of the Israelites is a type of the Christian Church--God's dealings with and deliverance of His people.[1]

But Christ is not only pre-figured in the Old Testament, He is seen by Guthrie wherever God speaks or acts. His high doctrine of the divinity of Jesus is entirely compatible with his assigning to Christ whatever in the Old Testament is credited to God. Thus, for example, "it is Christ's own voice" which says, "Rise up my love, my fair one . . . and come away." Or this, "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee, . . ."[2] Christ is the Creator, the God of providence, the Liberator of the Children of Israel who were redeemed and sustained in their journey and in their wars by His hand; Christ is the God of the Old as well as the New Testament.[3]

It is rather surprising that Guthrie does not hold that the "days" of the creation narrative are to be taken literally. Geological specimens of fossilized insects and animals convinced him that they lived many ages before the creation of man. The genealogy of man, however, is known from the Biblical record. The earth was perhaps created a million

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1 The Gospel in Ezekiel sees the Gospel in Ezekiel.
2 The Parables, p. 162 (Song of Solomon 2:10); Characters, II, 139 (Isaiah 43:2).
3 Saving Knowledge, pp. 157-58.

years ago, but only four thousand years elapsed between the creation of Adam and the advent of Christ. This, he said, is highly important because if it could be proved that man was created earlier than Scripture clearly states, it would "demolish the authority of the Bible."[1] Evolution he utterly rejects as "destructive of our dearest hopes," as nothing more than "extravagant vagaries" which may be dismissed as "the ravings of philosophy run mad." Man was created perfect in mind, body and spirit, he contended, and fell from this state of perfection into his present state of imperfection.

4. Natural Revelation:

Guthrie was a keen and devoted student of the natural world and his sermons abound in illustrations from this source. He saw the Bible as marvelously augmented and supported by the works of nature in revealing God to man. Apart from the way of salvation, he said, God has presented Himself to man's senses in a way that is "as good" as the Bible and "equally divine."[2] Unfortunately Guthrie does not expand this very interesting conclusion; he simply points out, by way of illustration, how nature expounds God's attributes. He felt that it becomes us with our finite and fallible minds to approach this great open book with an awe and reverence tuned

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1 Characters, I, 151; Ezekiel, p. 37.
2 Ezekiel, p. 147.

to receive that which God makes known of His wisdom, holiness and goodness and truth. He would exclaim with devotion: "I adore divinity in a humble daisy."

II. CONCERNING MIRACLES

With this view of the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures, it follows most naturally that Guthrie accepted the validity of all the Biblical miracles without the slightest qualification. The Bible simply and undramatically states that certain supernatural happenings transpired; Guthrie takes these narratives at their face value. He never tried to defend or prove them, nor is he any more concerned with explaining their validity than he is the existence of God. He thus makes it manifestly impossible to examine or expand a view which he himself has not expounded or enlarged. The one thing of interest which might be noted is that he attributes all miracles in the Bible to the work of Jesus Christ--in the Old Testament a-s well as the New.[1] And Christ by these supernatural performances had one view in mind: to establish the claims of God in His work for the redemption of man. The principle use Guthrie makes of the miraculous element in his preaching is to establish the power of God and the divinity of Christ, and that by graphically picturing a series of mighty events which only God Himself could perform.

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1 Ezekiel, p. 147.

III. CONCERNING GOD

1. The Attributes of God:

While profoundly aware of God in all of His attributes Guthrie was particularly impressed with and especially emphasized His mercy and His justice. God loves and God hates.

The "raging wrath of God" is a terrible reality and a horrible thing to contemplate. Said he:

> The wrath of God is the key to the Psalmists' sorrows, to an Apostle's tears, to the bloody mysteries of the Cross. That was the necessity which drew a Saviour down. Had that wrath been either tolerable or terminable, the sword of justice had never been dyed with the blood nor sheathed in the body of such a noble victim.[1]

If God would not hesitate to take the life of His beloved Son, the unrepentant are most surely "lost, condemned, exposed every moment to the wrath of God." God is patient and always gives a chance, but He can be provoked and His patience will not last forever. If man will not consent to glorify God on earth, then He will see that man shall "glorify him in the fires of hell."[2]

Still, God's justice contains mercy as well as wrath. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked and freely offers His mercy to all. And where is His mercy to be seen?

> On everything I read the words, "The earth, oh Lord, is full of thy mercy." Blessings bestowed on the unworthy

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1 Ibid., p. 97.
2 Our Father's Business, p. 51.

> come in the form of mercies; and thus mercies arrive on the wings of every moment. . . They fall in every shower, they shine in every sunbeam, they lie as thick around man's tent as desert manna in the days of old.[1]

There, in the fires of hell, mercy is seen--rejected! What more could even God do to show His mercy than to give His Son for us? Here, in this act, is God "in his double aspect, combined but not contradictory character, as at once just and justifier of them that believe in Jesus, as a God of Justice to punish sin in the surety, and a-s a God of Mercy to pardon it in the sinner . . ."[2]

2. The Fatherhood of God:

But the essence of Godhead is love. Above all else He is Father. His wrath, springing from His love, terrifies that it might save. That His love might prevail, He uses hell to frighten and heaven to lure, following the sinner to the very gates of hell pleading with him to accept that love. As He bolts the doors of heaven against the wicked He demonstrates His love in protecting His saints; as His stern justice refuses to overlook the slightest sin He evidences His love by awakening sinner and saint to a sense of entire dependence on Christ. His love is seen as clearly in the Ten Commandments as it is in the Gospel--"the difference is only in expression." As His mercy and wrath are shown in the Cross and in

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1 Ezekiel, p. 177.
2 Ibid., p. 160; The Way to Life, p. 83.

providence, so in like manner and with equal affluence in these He pours out His love.[1]

Guthrie makes the two classic distinctions in the Fatherhood-sonship relation. By creation God is the Father of all men, and all men by creation are the sons of God. For the same reason all men are brothers--"bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh."[2] On the other hand there exists a spiritual Father-son relationship wherein God becomes the Father of those only who have become sons through faith in Christ. In this sense saints are the sons of God their Father, while unrepentant sinners are the sons of Satan their father.[3]

3. The Trinity:

The Trinity, as a doctrine, seems not to have played more than a very mea~ger part of Guthrie's preaching. The word "Trinity" is never used, apparently, and in not more than a half dozen places does he refer to the relation of the Persons of the Godhead; and in these places the three Persons are seen at work in creation and redemption.[4] It can only be inferred from this fact that Guthrie, the practical preacher, was considerably more interested in setting before his hearers the mighty acts of each Person of the Trinity than he was

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1 Man and the Gospel, p. 189.
2 Our Father's Business, pp. 74-5.
3 Speaking to the Heart, p. 178; Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints, p. 10.
4 Ezekiel, pp. 315, 317-18.

in speculating on the mysteries of the great Three in One.

IV. CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT

Only one of Guthrie's sermons is devoted to the subject of the Holy Spirit.[1] To learn his views one is compelled to select those short references to the Spirit which occur lavishly scattered throughout his works. Even so, it will be found that these references are little more than statements of fact rather than explanations or expositions; and, with no important exception, the Spirit's work and not His person is the point at hand. Guthrie saw God the Spirit at work.

He is seen in the undertaking of creation:

> He is moving and at work. He presides at the birth of time. Evoking order from confusion, he is forming the world in the womb of eternity, and preparing a theatre for scenes and events of surpassing grandeur. Concerning that early period of creation, Moses has recorded this important fact,--"The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." In this glorious creation, therefore, . . . we behold the mighty monuments of his presence and power.[2]

It is the Spirit who converts the sinner. Dead to all righteousness and devoid of any power of his own to change his own heart, man is left utterly at the mercy of God's Spirit for that conversion which alone can mean life eternal. "To receive God's message, it must be accompanied by his power and Spirit. He who sa-ys, Come unto me, says also, No man

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1 "The Renovator", Ezekiel, pp. 315 ff.
2 Ezekiel, pp. 315, 317-18.

can come unto me, except my Father draw him."[1]

With a new heart the Spirit gives man a new will. He it is that sanctifies; "this work has been assigned to" Him. God has provided many aids to help onward toward a more holy life, but apart from the power daily exerted by His Spirit these are "vain, altogether vain." The converted will of man and the Spirit are harmonious co-workers, for "sanctification is the work of his Spirit; but the work of his Spirit in co-operation with ours."[2] Here is man's greatest comfort--God by His Spirit will not leave His own comfortless:

> When the believer is alone--God in his Holy Spirit abiding with him--he is not alone. . . Let a believer never count himself desolate. . . If thy heart lodges this noblest guest, it matters not how mean thy dwelling be; God shall abide with thee there on earth, till thou art called up to abide with him in heaven.[3]

The Spirit is also the creator and sustainer of the Church. It is He who "conducts the business of the Church on earth." The Waldensian Church in Italy may be taken as a symbol of the Church universal:

> That great congregation of devout converts was the greatest sight we had seen in Italy; no proud work of man . . . but the imperishable work of the Spirit of the living God: . . . those converts whom God has brought by his Eternal Spirit "out of the deep pit and mirey clay" of Popery.[4]

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1 "God's Message", Sunday Magazine, 1873, p. 287.
2 Saving Knowledge, p. 282.
3 Ezekiel, pp. 330-31.
4 Sundays Abroad, p. 217.

Created by the Spirit, the Church's life is in His hands.

> On all our Churches . . . we have most need of all of a large and liberal outpouring of the Holy Spirit. My constant and daily prayer for my congregation is that they may have much of God's Spirit and presence with them. . . . . Oh, for more of the Spirit's help, and that we may look more "to the hills from whence cometh our aid."[1]

Therefore when the Church administers the Sacraments or any of the means of grace, it must rely completely upon the blessings of the Holy Spirit for their efficacy. Holy Communion, baptism, prayer, the reading of the Word and the preaching of the Gospel all have their place, "but without the influence of the Holy Ghost, they will be found to harden rather than to soften the heart," for familiarity even with holy things often leads to contempt or indifference.[2]

V. CONCERNING GOD THE SON

Jesus Christ is God, the uncreated and eternal Son of God, co-equal with the Father and the express image of His person, no less God than man.[3] Did God act in Old Testament days? Then it was Christ. He held back the waters of the Jordan and divided the sea asunder; He thundered at Sinai and routed the enemy as the Captain of the Host. But more. Isaiah declares of Him: "Behold who hath created these things, that

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1 A letter to a friend. Memoir, pp. 527, 529.
2 Saving Knowledge, p. 94.
3 The Way to Life, p. 147. Supra, p. 121.

bringeth out their host by number; . . . the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth."[1]

Yet this God was and is as fully man as God. The Bible says that Jesus wept, but . . .

> . . . this was not a God weeping--God cannot weep. These were not angel's tears--for angels never weep. In them I . . . say with Pilate:--"behold the man!" the veritable man, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, soul of our soul, heart of our heart . . . How precious are those sorrows! They attest his perfect manhood.[2]

He was conceived in the womb of a woman as are other men. Yet His mother was a virgin and His Father was God. The sinless Son of God, yet He walked among men and shared with them their fleshly life.

Jesus Christ, then, is both God and man, the God-Man, one Person in two natures forever. Wonder of wonders, "dust and divinity! Creator and creature!" The two go together, and must be accepted thus by all who would come to Christ. "The riches of divine truth, redeeming love, and saving mercy are open only to such as come to Jesus with a belief in His divinity on the one hand, and a belief in His humanity on the other . . ."[3]

God became incarnate in order to suffer for the sins of man, and, suffering, redeem them unto Himself. But why would the Lord of Glory suffer for those whose deserved only death?

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1 Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints, p. 269.
2 The City, Its Sins and Sorrows, p. 6.
3 The Angels' Song, p. 11.

> One word conveys the answer--that word is Love; love to sinners, to the greatest, guiltiest sinners. Love brought him from the skies; love shut him up in Mary's womb; love shut him up in Joseph's tomb; . . . love wept in his tears, breathed in his sighs, spake in his groans, flowed in his blood, and died upon his cross. . . Thy love to me, to me a poor sinner, an ill-doing and hell-deserving sinner, was wonderful--. . . passing any tongue to tell; passing figures to illustrate or fancy to imagine, thought to measure or eternity itself to praise.[1]

Jesus ascended into heaven "in the very body which was stretched on the cross" and which now "fills his Father's throne." In glory He is and ever shall remain both God and man, for His work of redemption is yet incomplete; and when it is complete He will continue to be identified with His saints in His glorified body.[2] What is His work in glory? He pleads the sinner's cause at His Father's right hand; He rules over the physical universe and His spiritual kingdom; He exercises all the powers of the providential God.

> As both God and man, he occupies the throne of grace, and also the throne of Providence--holding under his dominion all worlds, and principalities, and powers . . . He who lay a feeble infant on Mary's bosom . . . now sustains the weight of this, and a thousand worlds besides.[3]

VI. CONCERNING PROVIDENCE

> In the providence of God a man's destiny--his path in life . . .--may be determined by very trivial circumstances; of which . . . he who has the honour to address this assembly is an example.[4]

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1 The Way to Life, p. 171.
2 Ibid., p. 206.
3 Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints, pp. 107-108.
4 "Ragged Schools", Y.M.C.A. Lectures, p. 441.

In these words Guthrie addressed a London audience. His awareness of a presiding Providence in the affairs of all men and nations is one of the most conspicuous things to be noted in his writings. If he was sure of anything its certain that it was that God rules--and nothing is too great or too small to escape His care.

Believing this he was yet ready to confess that there is much mystery in "Providence [that] it baffles the wisest to solve." In His infinite wisdom God by no means always stoops to the obvious, and man is often left without a clue as to what His purpose is. The eye of faith will not question that which Providence has seen fit to obscure, but that faith can surely rest in the fact that God acts for the best:

> Whatever appearance of error his ways or works may present, be assured that the defect is not in the object, but in the spectator, . . . in you, not in God; not in the plans of infinite wisdom, but in the finite mind, which has the folly to condemn what it has not the understanding to comprehend.[1]

God ordinarily works out His purpose by means and not by miracles, not aside from but according to His own laws of nature. Everything is impressed into service. Even the wicked serve Him by their very wickedness, and "when the rod has served its purpose, He breaks it and casts it into the fire."[2] Thus whatever happens and by whatever means, good or bad, are these happenings perpetrated, God makes holy use of them.

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1 Ezekiel, p. 44.
2 Characters, II, 263.

All things being in His hands, it is nothing less than blasphemy to speak of one's fortunes as the result of chance or of fate. Whatever one's condition, it is not the result of fate or the fortunes of chance--but Providence.

> God has placed men in different circumstances and endowed them with different gifts. . . The varied conditions of society are the result of laws man did not enact, and cannot repeal. And though none are forbidden . . . from seeking to improve their circumstances, and rise above the level of their birth, as the earth has its hills and valleys, the world will have its higher and lower classes; some wealthy, others poor . . . If he sees meet that men should be poor, in vain they rise up early and lie down late, and eat the bread of sorrow.[1]

For one to be dissatisfied with his lot, therefore, "is not only wicked but absurd, since true happiness lies much less in changing our condition than in making the best of it."[2]

Sin is the source of all suffering and sorrow, and were it not for the doctrine of Original Sin many providences would be utterly inscrutable. There was neither sorrow nor pain in Eden, nor is there any in heaven. But God makes the wrath of men to praise Him and uses sin's results as a rod to punish the wicked that He might bring them to repentance, and to remind His own people of their failures. When God afflicts He does so as our Father, and only for our good and His glory.[3]

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1 Our Father's Business, pp. 127-28.

2 The Angels' Song, p. 60. Strange words from a philanthropist whose greatest happiness was a life spent in the changing of men's conditions. Of poverty he says: "If it comes not through vices, it is the cup our Father has mingled for us." Man and the Gospel, p. 161.

3 The Way to Life, p. 397.

VII. CONCERNING MAN AND HIS SIN

Adam and Eve were created from the dust of the earth and placed in the perfect environment of the Garden of Eden. God made "Eve lovelier, I believe, than the fairest of her daughters . . .

> . . . [and Adam] stepped upon this earth a being of beauty--music in his voice, mind throned on his lofty brow, with an eye of sympathy, a heart of love, a hand and fingers formed for skilled and peaceful labour, and a frame in all respects the fitting shrine of a soul moulded in the image of Divinity.[1]

And so in the beginning God established "a harmony on earth as perfect as that of heaven. Nothing was out of tune; nor was there a jarring note in all creation."[2]

But sin robbed Adam and all his posterity of the bliss of this Eden Paradise. In the "bitterest home-leaving the world has seen," Adam and Eve were cast out for eating the forbidden fruit, and, as the federal head of the race, all mankind was cast out in them, condemned and expatriated. This was the Original Sin to which all men are heirs, and the root of all evil. Since the Fall, all men, apart from God's grace, are dead in trespasses and in sin.

Why did God permit sin? "Let theologians settle the metaphysics of the Fall: their business may be to know how we became sinners; our first, great, immediate business, is to

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1 Out of Harness, p. 366; The War in Some of its Social, Political, and Religious Aspects, p. 12.

2 Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints, p. 338.

know how we are to be saved." It is a conundrum to be sure. "How a wise, holy, good, and gracious God permitted what he certainly could have prevented . . . is now a mystery, and may forever remain one."[1] Whatever may be our views on its origin the fact remains that it is a terrible certainty; and though it is hard to believe, even the suckling infant is utterly dead in sin.[2]

Sin is not to be taken lightly. It is exceedingly sinful. Do you with your impeccable manners and conduct resent being called a sinner?

> Hypocrite and dead professor! let us open thy bosom: full of all corruption, how it smells like a charnel-house! We are driven back by the noisome stench--we hasten to close the door; it is a painted, putrid sepulchre, whose fair exterior but aggravates the foulness within.[3]

This foulness is so very exceedingly sinful that it brought God Himself out of the skies and with fiendish glee nailed Him to a Roman cross. How sinful is sin!

Yet the image of God in man, though horribly mutilated and defaced, is not entirely lost. Sin has affected the whole man, but it has not affeeted him wholly; wholly in extent but not in degree. Some small traces of the divine handiwork still remain as God's image.

> Among the most wicked men, none are found perfectly bad. The worst can be worse; and shall be, since the

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1 Ezekiel, pp. 82, 85.
2 What Wilt Thou Have Me Do?, pp. 8-9.
3 Ezekiel, p. 33.

> guilt of the impenitent will increase with their years, and go on darkening, deepening through an eternity of sin and suffering.[1]

VIII. CONCERNING MAN AND SALVATION

1. The Atonement:

The law which God wrote upon the table of man's heart and later renewed at Sinai in stone, required that it be perfectly kept or else man should surely die. Sin made man incapable of perfect obedience. Thus, "ever since the Fall, the gate to heaven by the law has stood shut, nor once turned on its hinges . . ." God solved this dilemma by the Atonement.

> God manifest in the flesh . . . with the right hand of Divinity to lay on God, and the left hand of humanity to lay on man, and thus the "fellow" and friend of both, to reconcile the estranged--in short, a man to suffer and a God to satisfy.[2]

God's wrath is against sin. Therefore sin was "mysteriously associated with" the man Christ Jesus that it might receive its due punishment in Him. This was a work for the Godhead alone. God "looks on our sins as laid on Christ . . . and turns on our generous substitute an unmitigated vengeance. To reach sin--to slay sin--he passes his sword through the bosom of a well-beloved Son."[3] This Atonement was a bloody, substitutionary sacrifice in which the Son willingly received

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1 Out of Harness, p. 270.
2 Ezekiel, p. 159.
3 Ibid., p. 163.

the fulness of His Father's wrath in His own body. His blood is the ransom which is the believer's surety for his great debt of sin.[1] The Atonement does two things for the believer: first, he is pardoned of his sin because God's righteous justice has already been vindicated in his Substitute. Secondly, he stands as spotlessly righteous before the holy God because his Substitute has rendered perfect obedience to the law.

> Taking not only our nature but our guilt upon him, he put on our shame, that he might apparel us in his glory. What an exchange! Our sins are imputed to him, while his righteousness is imputed to us.[2]

2. Faith:

The Atonement is made efficacious to the believer by faith; and faith is of God, a free gift. "We are of ourselves unable to embrace the salvation which God has provided . . . A lost sinner . . . has no power of his own to turn from sin and the error of his ways." Faith is a natural characteristic of human nature; but for natural faith to become saving faith God must give it "a right, holy, heavenward direction; to convert it into faith in things eternal."[3] God gives life only to the believer; yet man is dead in sin and cannot believe. What, then, is the impotent sinner to do?

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1 Saving Knowledge, pp. 159, 182. Guthrie says nothing as to whom the "ransom" is paid.
2 The Way to Life, p. 172.
3 Ezekiel, p. 255.

> Do you say, But I cannot believe! I reply, True! you cannot of yourself . . . Still, if you ask faith of God, he will certainly give it; working in you by the power of his Holy Spirit.[1]

Faith is the "medium of connection" between God and man which may be described as "that intimate, spiritual, indissoluble, eternal union which is formed between the Saviour and the saved." Through this medium flow all the benefits of redemption so that,"a believer in Christ, in him I satisfied divine justice before earth and heaven; in him I triumphed on the cross; in him, on the third day of burial, I left the tomb, rising in anticipation of the hour when the dead shall wake . . ."[2] Faith centers in Christ and no other.

The power of faith to save rests not on the degree but on the kind of faith exercised. True faith saves even though it be "but one degree above zero." The sinner's hope is founded on the greatness of his Saviour and not on the greatness of his faith. Of itself, faith has no power; it is the God-given instrument which makes God's power available. Thus in all things the believer is more than conqueror by virtue of God's power which is his through faith.[3]

3. Election:

As justifying faith is all of God, as the object of

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1 The Way to Life, p. 13.
2 Ibid., pp. 387-88. (Italics added).
3 Man and the Gospel, p. 345.

faith is God's Atonement, and as man is depraved and dead in sin, it logically follows that God has selected and called out those who are saved, that "the saved are all debtors to the free choice and grace of God."

> It is not on our merits, but on His mercy, the choice turns . . . God chooses those who are to be heirs of grace before their character is or can be formed--before their baptism, even before their birth; nor only before their birth, but before that of time itself--ere there was a man to sin, or a world to sin in; ere sun shone or angel sung.[1]

Man has no merit. He is saved by God's "free and sovereign" election. By nature His people are no better than others but for God's gifted grace. The history of the Church is "some taken, some left"; some whom God has called out, some He has been pleased to pass by. Otherwise there is no possible explanation of the solemn fact that of two people of identical parentage, background and opportunity, one is saved and the other is lost.[2] God's sovereignty to save is final.

The doctrine of Total Depravity supports this doctrine. As has been noted, man is dead in sin. He cannot choose God. Therefore "it is absolutely necessary that Christ should first choose you as his subjects, before you can choose him as your king."[3] Is man then so to sit back and wait for God to act? "Remember, I pray you, that according to

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1 Saving Knowledge, pp. 81-2.
2 Ezekiel, pp. 189, 192; The Parables, p. 240.
3 Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints, p. 88.

the same gospel [which declares man's depravity and God's election], those who receive are those who ask, and those who find are such as seek."[1]

Does the doctrine of election mean that God excludes some from Himself by turning His back on some poor sinner?

> "[Christ] is the propitiation for our sins; and not ours only; but also for the sins of the whole world." The whole world!--ah! some would say, that is dangerous language. It is God's language . . . It throws a zone of mercy around the world. Perish the hand that would narrow it by a hair's-breadth! Beneath God's grace in Jesus Christ . . . there is room for all the men and women in the wide world; so that none shall be damned but they who damn themselves. It were to make God a liar to doubt that our sins can be pardoned; ay, and shall be pardoned, if we seek forgiveness. . . This pardon has no limits in time, or age, or guilt, or class, or character. It is clogged with no condition but that you accept it.[2]

4. Conversion:

In the eyes of God the world is divided into two parts: the saved and the lost. All men stand on the brink either of heaven or hell, and the state of a man at death seals his eternal destiny--and the gulf is wide between the lost and saved.

This great disparity in the eternal state of men also exists in this present life. Saved, a man is brought from death into life. Their difference now is the difference in life and death. Conversion means a thoroughly radical and

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1 Ibid., p. 144.
2 Ibid., p. 413; Saving Knowledge, pp. 187-90.

complete change.[1]

Conversion manifests itself in several ways.[2] There is a change in affections. Where once "the world" received the sinner's love, now the saint fastenes his affections on things above. "The grace of God works such a thorough change of feelings that, what was once hated you now love, and what was once loved you now loathe . . ." Again, "the understanding and judgement are enlightened." Once the greatest fool in the world, the sinner now sees things in their true perspective--sin is seen in its horror and salvation in its sublime beauty. Still again, "the will is renewed." Once God's implacable enemy, it is now his joy and life to do his Father's will, and God's will becomes his. Lastly, "the temper and dispositions are changed and sanctified." The Christian graces are the rule now rather than the exception in his daily walk--generous, kind, catholic and gentle, having that mind in him which is in Christ Jesus.

Conversion, therefore, is not mere respectability or morality or mental conviction. These marks the Christian will certainly have, but they do not make a Christian. The loveliest lady in the highest circles of refinement, without having experienced the new birth, is as completely lost as the vilest prostitute of the city's streets. No, God cleanses man from

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1 Ibid., p. 29.
2 Ezekiel, pp. 298-314.

the inside out.

> Reformation sometimes passes for regeneration; and outward improvement of habits and decorum of life, which will never supply the place of sanctification in the judgement of a holy, heart-searching God. . . It is in the heart the change is wrought for salvation.[1]

Conversion may come with the suddenness and startling clarity of Pentecost, or it may, like the break of day, come quietly and even unnoticed. The experience of the Church's saints is very different on this point. When and how it comes is not important--it is only important that it comes.[2]

5. Good Works:

Few preachers have more vigorously sermonized on the doctrine of Good Works than Guthrie. Few have more zealously practiced what they preached than he. But he never propounded the subject without first making clear the relation of faith and works. Faith first, works next; always in that order. Man is justified by faith; he is judged by works. Works have nothing whatever to do with justification. The good a man does before he is justified is filthy rags, meaningless, sheer idleness, "splendid vices".[3] Works follow faith.

This order is not simply "the nice and fine distinctions which theologians sometimes spin"; faith and conversion must precede sanctification and good works. The one springs

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1 Saving Knowledge, p. 296.
2 Ezekiel, pp. 266-67.
3 Man and the Gospel, p. 113.

from the other. Nevertheless, works will inevitably follow faith as certainly as night follows day.

> Faith without works is a lie--a monstrous lie, one of the blackest lies that ever came out of hell. Faith without works is dead; a corpse, dress it up as you may, a rotten corpse. I don't believe in a religion which expends itself in praying and preaching; not I--they may who like, but not I.[1]

The Christian has no alternative but to follow Christ, "our pattern as well as our propitiation. Therefore they that are Christ's live not to, anymore than they live through, themselves . . ."[2] He is a practitioner of good works because it glorifies God, it justifies his faith, it is the fruit by which he shall be judged at the last, and, so long as this earthly life lasts, it turns the most menial and common-place into tasks shining with divine splendor. There is so much for the Christian to do; so little time in which to do it.

> Rest? Rest?--what have you to do with rest? Did Christ ever rest? Does God ever rest? And if you must have rest --oh! your body will find it in the grave, and you will rest--your redeemed, blood-bought, purified, and happy spirit will find it in yon blessed sky. Earth for work -- Heaven for wages; Earth for the battle--Heaven for the crown; Time for employment--Eternity for enjoyment.[3]

6. Sanctification:

As the converted man will inevitably perform good works, he will also of necessity in some degree become sanc-

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1 Bear Ye One Another's Burdens, pp. 12-13.

2 Saving Knowledge, p. 168. "Our pattern as well as propitiation" is perhaps Guthrie's favorite expression.

3 Lord, What Wilt Thou Have Me Do?, p. 31.

tified. The two cannot be separated. "Sanctification and justification are inseparably connected; and what God hath joined together, let none attempt to put asunder."[1] When it is said that sanctification "follows" justification, it is not to be understood that the one is "prior in point of time" to the other. Sanctification "sets in" at the very self-same moment a man is justified. Therefore for him to talk of faith in Christ at the same time continuing an unholy life "is a mockery and a miserable delusion."

Sanctification means, "in plain English, to be made holy," and holiness presents both negative and positive aspects. Negatively, sin must be eradicated by the painful process of crucifying the flesh, dying to sin, renunciation of the world.

"If we have been enabled through divine grace . . . to deny ourselves pleasures which we once indulged in . . .

> . . . then we are crucifying the flesh. This is to be sanctified, to die to sin . . . The question is not whether sin is altogether crucified, but is crucified at all?--is whether, though it be not with a perfect hatred, we really hate it?--is whether we are delivered, though not completely, from its power?--is whether it has ceased to reign, though it has not ceased to remain within us?[2]

The positive aspect of sanctification is "living to righteousness." Here, as in good works, we are to look to

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1 Saving Knowledge, pp. 193-96, 255.
2 Ibid., pp. 270, 275.

Christ for His Spirit to cleanse and His example to follow, for sanctification lies "in conformity to His temper, mind, and life." Such conformity, however far off, is perfectly essential to the Christian life; and it is also perfectly certain.

The slow, quiet and unnoticed work of sanctification is most certainly taking place in the life of every believer. "All whom God justifies, he will certainly sooner or later sanctify." This is the real meaning of predestination and the perseverance of the saints. Those whom God has converted and saved, He has predestined to a growing life of holiness. "The predestination I believe in, is that of Paul--"Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."[1] Of the growing life of holiness the believer may be absolutely assured, for God has decreed it.

But it will be a fierce struggle through all the days of his life. He will have to use all the means God has placed in his hands, and be forever calling for a full measure of the Holy Ghost's outpouring to enable him to flee from every temptation and fight every battle.[2] Aided thus, however, his aim is nothing less than perfection--an end as hopeful as it is desirable. Begun on earth and continued in heaven, the holy life ever progresses throughout eternity, never ceasing

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1 Ezekiel, p. 351.
2 Characters, I, 328.

in its upward spiral toward divinity. But perfection is a hope and never a reality in this present life, for God "detects what is 'of the earth earthy' in our noblest sacrifices and most holy services."[1] Heaven admiting no unclean thing, "in the very hour of death, therefore, the Spirit of God must crown all his other labours with a rapid and extraordinary work of sanctification."[2] Knowing this, the Christian faces death with calm and even joyful equanimity, convinced that for him "it is gain, and cannot come too suddenly, or too soon."

IX. CONCERNING PRAYER

To his self-imposed question, "How does [prayer] work?", Guthrie's reply is, "That is a subject into which man with his limited faculties cannot too reverently enter, about which the profoundest theologians cannot too modestly speak. . . . But even as nature teaches, and his Word clearly reveals, God will have all men to pray."[3] Guthrie makes no attempt to delve the deeps of this subject.

For his personal devotions it should be the Christian's rule to pray every morning and every evening. Through such spiritual exercise he can develope a "frame of mind" in which he is in reality praying without ceasing. Here is a

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1 Ibid., II, p. 267.
2 The Way to Life, p. 311.
3 Out of Harness, p. 314.

means of grace which, in one respect at least, is the greatest of all, for it is always available and can never be taken away. Upom this the Christian's life depends. The Holy Spirit supplies his needs only if asked to do so through the privilege of prayer; but through prayer the Spirit affords the soul's breath of life.[1]

Prayer to be genuine must gush straight from the wellsprings of an earnest and utterly sincere heart. "It is the heart that prays. . .

> . . . The prayer of the lip, of the memory, of the wandering mind, in its dead formality, is, in God's eyes, of no more value than the venal prayers of Rome, or the revolutions of the Tartar's wheel.[2]

For what is the believer to pray?

> Our prayers should embrace all our needs and the everchanging circumstances of life. . . We are to carry every thing to him; nor go to the place, nor engage in the business, nor take part in the amusement, nor associate with the company, on which we cannot ask His blessing.[3]

Prayer is always answered, always prevails--always, that is, within two limitations.[4] No man has a right to pray for that which God has not promised. But though we can pray for nothing which God has not promised, this limitation melts away when we realize that God has promised all that the soul can properly desire. The other limitation is that God is the

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1 The Way to Life, p. 250. In a letter to the Duchess of Argyll he spoke of prayer as his "supreme desire" and"vital air". MSS letters, National Library of Scotland, 1851.

2 Ezekiel, p. 422.

3 "The Evil", Sunday Magazine, 1871, p. 262.

4 Ezekiel, p. 427.

final judge of all prayer. This restriction, however, is a gain for the believer who knows that God always judges right and knows what is best. But for these two limitations, "prayer moves the hand that moves the world, and secures for the believer the resources of Divinity." If God as our Father does not rule in providence, then "I see no sense in prayer." But God most certainly rules in providence, and does providentially answer prayer. In fact the Bible is full of Providence and prayer working together.[1]

God does not have to be wheedled as though He were reluctant to give to His children. The truth is . . .

> . . . His answer anticipates their prayer. The supply is on the road before the want is expressed; the door opens before the hand has struck it; while prayer is travelling up the one line, the answer is speeding down the other.[2]

Indeed our failure is more often that we do not ask enough than that we ask too much. The son should expect a great deal from his Father's boundless resources; and if he would honor Him more with his faith, God would honor him more with His favors. The answer may not always correspond with the petition. Our own good may lead God to translate the petition into quite a different answer. This is understandable:

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1 Out of Harness, p. 313. At the time he said this, a cattle disease was scourging Britain. Said he: "While we acknowledge an Almighty hand in the pest which . . . is destroying our herds, ruining the fortunes of men, and threatening . . . all, let us resort to prayer." Characters, II, 106.

2 Ezekiel, p. 429.

> In our ignorance we often seek what God in his superior wisdom and love refuses. He does not give because it were not good for us to get. Shortsighted mortals! . . . How should God's people learn neither to regard their trials as evils, nor ever to doubt his kindness.[1]

There are those who attack the validity of prayer, who, "rushing into regions where man loses himself and reason fails to guide his faltering steps, . . . set forth crude and ill-digested notions which they dignify by the name of philosophy."[2] These objections may be bundled up and cast aside as nonsense because they are "contrary to the plain sense of the Word of God." We simply ignore these protestations, and "like little children, we take the simple Word, nor trouble ourselves with the metaphysics of the question."[3] But if an answer need be given in addition to the Bible's teaching, it is necessary to say no more than that prayer is an universal instinct of the human soul, as natural as it is for an infant to suck, and just as necessary to the maintenance of life. "I could stand on that alone."[4]

X. CONCERNING THE SACRAMENTS

Guthrie's references to the sacraments are rare and, for the most part, rather negative in character. In his published sermons none is devoted to either of the sacraments;

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1 "The Evil", Sunday Magazine, 1871, p. 261.
2 Out of Harness, p. 314.
3 Ezekiel, p. 419.
4 Out of Harness, p. 314.

not even one division of any one sermon. The priestly function of his ministerial office was of far less interest and importance to him than his work as preacher and pastor.

1. The Lord's Supper:

The Communion Supper is a "symbol" of Christ's "bloody death" where the redeemed hold "high intercourse with heaven."[1] In symbolizing that death it is therefore a "commemoration feast" bringing to the mind and heart "the salvation, not of a race, but of a world."

The above paragraph is all that is to be gleaned from all Guthrie's works concerning this sacrament. The following excerpt from one of his letters is revealing, showing the practical turn of his mind even when concerned with the most sacred matters. While in England he attended a Methodist Communion service:

> While the scene left a solemn and holy impression on our hearts, it reminded me of a scheme which has often floated through my mind. I would like to see a real practical Love Feast provided for the poor of God's household every Sabbath day. . . I have often thought it would be a grand scheme--a beautiful and Christian thing--to provide at least one decent and comfortable diet for our poor brethren and sisters in Christ on the Lord's Day.[2]

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1 Characters, I, 263; Speaking to the Heart, p. 172; The Principles of the Disruption, and a Plea for the Ante-Disruption Ministers, p. 7.

2 Memoir, pp. 524-25.

2. Baptism:

The mode of baptism is that of pouring water upon the head of the recipient as it was done in the New Testament.[1] This mode signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit as was beautifully demonstrated in a Waldensian service in Italy. The infant's mother carried a phial of water in her bosom which she gave to the minister at the moment of baptism:

> When we saw the minister pouring on the infant's brow water warmed with the life of a gentle, loving heart, it needed no great flight of fancy to see in that symbol the Holy Spirit proceeding from the loving bosom of our Lord, and poured by his hand on such as he has redeemed.[2]

This holy rite is a "mere outward ordinance" which "attaches us to the visible church, admits to that, and is its door of entrance; but . . . it does not of necessity form a living attachment between us and the Saviour."[3] The doctrine of baptismal regeneration is as untrue as it is dishonoring to a gracious God who would never hang His mercies on the cold formality of a mere outward ordinance.

> Is it not an undeniable and melancholy fact that the lives of persons in all churches, even the most transcendental in their claims, demonstrate that many are baptised with water who have never experienced the baptism of the Holy Ghost?[4]

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1 Ezekiel, p. 236; The Way to Life, p. 179.
2 Sundays Abroad, p. 282.
3 Ezekiel, pp. 234, 250.
4 Ibid., p. 237.

XI. CONCERNING ANGELS

It is probably correct to say that none of Guthrie's extant sermons is without some reference to angels. He makes no attempt, however, to enlarge upon the subject. But since he alludes to them so frequently, a necessarily brief account of his views will be given.

The ground for belief in angels is the Bible. "A belief in guardian saints is a silly Popish superstition; but we have good authority in Scripture for believing in" guardian angels.[1] They are celestial beings, "blessed and benevolent spirits," whose usual abode is heaven where they live according to their differing orders-- "angels and archangels, seraphim and cherubim, principalities, dominion, and powers; all perfect mirrors of divine perfections, yet each class . . . differing from one another in glory."[2] At one time some angels sinned and were cast from heaven into hell, every one of them condemned forever. The remaining ones are perfectly sinless even though their missions briefly expose them to the sins of the world.

God created these active "animate creatures" for the sole purpose of glorifying Himself by doing His will. Thus the heavens are full of them hovering about the Ancient of Days, singing and praising Him. Not confined to heaven, they

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1 The Angels' Song, p. 31
2 Our Father's Business, p. 125.

speed upon wings from heaven to earth and from world to world in the service of God. In the Old Testament drama, for example, they appeared often in various manifestitations as messengers and servants of the Lord. "Did not the angels--one being God himself in human form--announce to Abraham the doom of Sodom . . ?"[1] Today it is redemption that "engages the sympathies and employes the wings of angels," and every child of God has his guardian angel who watches with jealous interest his every act, grieves when he sins, watches over his death-bed and "bears his spirit away in loving arms to the realms of glory and the presence of his Lord."[2]

XII. CONCERNING SATAN

The introductory remarks concerning Guthrie's views on angels are equally applicable to his views on Satan.

Once holding the highest place among all the angels, Satan's pride became his undoing and, together with his angelic followers, he was cast out of heaven never to be redeemed or restored. Becoming God's enemy in heaven he continues to be God's formidable and deathless antagonist whenever and however he can. Man, who has God's promise of redemption, offers the one avenue through which he can work his demonic schemes; a fact which makes him man's "mortal and malignant

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1 Ibid., p. 115. Guthrie here introduces a new trinity: God-Angel-Man. Theological technicalities are not binding!

2 Ezekiel, p. 420.

and infernal enemy."[1]

His evil power found its initial expression in the Garden of Eden, and from that date in history "for forty long centuries he proudly held the field. No man had proved a match for him."[2] But Christ's resurrection "chained" him so that his power was shortened and his sure overthrow was sealed. And as he walks about today seeking whom he may devour, he "connot go a step further against the saints than God gives him chain."[3] The wicked are his servants and children in that they acknowledge his and not God's power and dominion in their lives. Thus he leads them to ruin by every diabolical contrivance at his command, and in the end drags them down "resisting, struggling, shrieking, into the lowest hell."

Why does God permit this very real demonic creature to continue to exercise his power? He does so that He may hurl him "into a deeper hell," and that "a redeemer's power may appear the more triumphant in his ignominious and total overthrow."[4]

XIII. CONCERNING ESCHATOLOGY

"Last Things" occupied a most conspicuous place in the religious thinking of this highly imaginative Scot. His

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1 Loc. cit.
2 Saving Knowledge, p. 162.
3 Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints, p. 296.

thoughts were based upon a most literal interpretation of Biblical prophecies relating to future time and eternity. His vivid imagination and powerful descriptive gifts, coupled with his intense belief in the importance of these matters, makes the things of this world grow strangely dim in the blazing light of the stupendous events yet to come. But often the trail he follows becomes so obscure that it is quite impossible to trace these cataclysmic happenings as an entirely orderly series of events. His purpose here is to inject into the minds and hearts of his people the reality of the eternal that they may determine to live the present for the sake of the future. Thus the stirring, pleading, threatening, deadly earnest note of his preaching: "Choose ye this day!"

At this point it should be mentioned that Guthrie maintained that all Bible prophecies would some day be fulfilled to the letter. In fact, he says, . . .

> . . . the stars shall drop like figs from the shaking skies, and these ancient heavens themselves shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of what God has spoken shall fail, till all be fulfilled.[1]

Of these prophecies the most imminent and most longed for is that of the fall of the Church of Rome. Its overthrow cannot come too soon, and when it does, what a day of rejoicing that will be! "Thank God her doom is written; nor does it seem long now till the cry will be heard, sounding from shore to

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1 Ibid., p. 377.

shore and pole to pole, "Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen!" Lord, hasten it in thine own time!"[1]

1. The Last Days:

Guthrie believed that the time was coming when the entire world would be saved, when whole nations (especially the Jews) would "kiss the feet once nailed to the cross," when this earth would be wholly and completely at peace under Christ as His kingdom, when the influence of the Gospel would permeate every soul with its "final universal manifestation," and "our world shall again become the abode of peace" where farming and other peaceful pursuits shall be the joy of its people.[2]

2. The Second Coming and the Judgement:

These halcyon last years of the world's history will, however, come abruptly to an end. The archangel, "with one foot on dry land and the other on the sea," will blow the trumpet announcing the end of time. Christ in glory will descend attended by "ten times ten thousand angels," the resur-

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1 Sundays Abroad, p. 242.

2 Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints, p. 372. He doesn't say whether or not this is "the millennium" or that Christ will reign bodily on earth. In a letter relating a conversation with an English "Lady" on this subject, he told her he had been toobusy with the present for "such inquiries and speculations" as the millennium. He was not interested in the various millennial theories. Memoir, p. 523.

rection will take place when the souls and bodies of the saints are re-united,[1] the heavens shall flee away and the earth wrapped in flames as all things in heaven and earth are redeemed to God.

Thus the awesome scene of judgement is prepared--the final and irrevocable Judgement, . . .

> . . . the most solemn scene of which this world shall be the theatre; the last great assize: all Adam's family met face to face for the first and last time, in one vast assembly; the God of Glory descending in judgement; the great white throne filled by the august person of His Son; the crowd of angels, ministers to do His will, and give, in the curse executed on one class and the crowns conferred on the other, to every man according to his deeds, entering the vast, awed, agitated, solemn multitude to part it into two great divisions; to call those who have accepted Christ to glory, and consign such as have unhappily rejected Him to inexpressible and endless woe.[2]

3. Heaven and Hell:

In his preaching, Guthrie made liberal use of heaven and hell--each in about equal degree. He graphically describes them both (unmixed bliss or undiluted horror) for the purpose of persuading his hearers to choose the one and to despise the other.

The believer's true home, he said, is heaven, not this world. And where is heaven? "I cannot tell," and we shall

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1 The Way to Life, p. 266. The resurrection body will be "perfect in beauty, in growth mature; to undergo henceforth and through eternal ages, neither change nor decay."

2 Out of Harness, p. 291.

never know until God brings us there. What is it like? Again "I cannot tell," but "the best description of it is to say that it is indescribable" and quite beyond the loftiest flights of imagination.[1]

Yet the important things concerning heaven we do know. We know that it is the "peculiar dwelling-place of God," that where God is we shall be, that there is perfect harmony, love, peace and joy; all jealosy, bitterness, hate and selfishness is banished, and humility, holiness and purity is there without spot or blemish. What a change we shall experience! From the company of sinful men to the company of sinless angels, from the symbols of Christ to the presence of the glorified Lord Himself, from the darkness of this world to the ineffable light of the next. There we shall meet all our dear ones "all unchanged, but that they are more lovely and more loving."[2] With angels as servants, heaven will be populated by kings upon thrones: first, the saints; next, though "not far removed," the Mediator; "but above all these, in the unscaled heights of Godhead, casting the shadow of its glory over the boundless universe, rises the throne of the

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1 Ezekiel, pp. 383-84; Speaking to the Heart, p. 145. Nevertheless, Guthrie liberally used his own imagination and Biblical images to portray the wonders of heaven.

2 The Way to Life, p. 398. "In particular [Guthrie] pictured to himself his son John, who died in infancy and whose memory he always fondly cherished, running to the golden gate to meet him." Daily Review, p. 19.

Ancient of Days."[1]

Hell is as equal a reality as heaven even though there are some people foolish enough to cast aspertions upon what they are pleased to think is nothing but the figment of warped imaginations. They are willing enough to believe in heaven but not hell. But man has the same reason for believing in the existence of hell as he has in heaven. To dismiss hell means to dismiss heaven, and "I cannot consent that you should pull down my heaven."[2] Hell? Yes! "It is an awful thought, that pit; it is an awful reality, that pit; it is an awful abode, that pit . . ." Yet every unregenerate sinner passes every moment of his life perilously suspended over that yawning, bottomless abyss. And if he dies unrepentant his doom in hell is sealed forever, for over its doors is written, "Let them who enter here leave hope behind."

It makes little difference whether or not the Bible's description of hell's fires and worms is to be taken literally. The point is not the literalness of the terms used by the sacred writers, but the facts which these terms were used to describe or illustrate. The important thing to keep in mind is that God's inspired penmen were compelled to use the most gruesome kind of figurative language (if figurative it

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1 Ibid., p. 145.
2 Ezekiel, pp. 90, 248.

be) in order to adequately or even partially warn man of the horrors which await all who disregard God's offer of mercy in Christ Jesus His Son and man's Saviour.[1]

XIV. CONCERNING THE CHURCH

Much of what Guthrie held in regard to the Church has been noted throughout this chapter. There are two aspects of the Church's life to which he gave considerable prominence and which will be considered in this section.

1. Worship:

Guthrie's son said that his father "never had any sympathy with sacerdotalism, whether Popish or Protestant."[2] As a good Scotch Presbyterian he warned against sensualism in worship which had within itself an inherent and dangerous tendency toward outright idolatry. He felt, however, that it was entirely possible that many of the Scottish churches leaned too far in the other direction with services that were "bald and bare" and uninspiring. In this respect few of his brethren had a broader outlook than he. As he said:

> The bigotry of Papists is not worse than, or indeed so inexcusable as, that which maintains we have nothing to learn from others in the ordinances of God's house and

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1 Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints, pp. 126-130. Guthrie tended toward a literal interpretation here as elsewhere, though he does not say so in so many words.

2 C.J. Guthrie, op. cit., p. 11.

> worship. It were ludicrous, if it were not sad, to find good Protestants who deny infallibility to the Pope, and yet, resisting all change, seem to regard their fathers or themselves as infallible; and their own system as so perfect that it is incapable of improvement. . . Very seldom have I worshipped with Christians of other denominations, either at home or abroad . . . without seeing some thing in their churches which I would have been happy to engraft on my own. And this is a feeling . . . common to all who . . . have sought to see in their services not what they might condemn, but might admire and imitate. . . . What is commendable in churches other than our own, why should we be such bigots as not to copy?[1]

He advocated, though there is no evidence that he ever implemented in his own church, as "the most perfect form of public worship" a service somewhat between the Anglican and Presbyterian. As to just exactly what forms such a service would entail should be a matter "elastic enough" to meet the needs of the particular congregation concerned.[2] A unison or a responsive reading of the Ten Commandments as practiced in the Anglican communion is as practical as it is desirable. As for music, it has always played a goodly part in the worship of God, but it is not a matter of importance whether or not musical instruments are employed. Much too much sound and fury has been raised over this, a question which at most is but a matter of taste.[3]

But prayer, perhaps, is the most important of the various forms used in worship. Prayer should be used in three

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1 Out of Harness, pp. 335-36.
2 Sundays Abroad, pp. 90, 92, 263.
3 Ibid., pp. 264-65; Out of Harness, p. 35. Guthrie personally preferred simple unaccompanied singing.

forms, though not necessarily all three in any one service. First is responsive prayer, a form as old as the Psalms and especially desirable in that it tends to make worship truly common worship. Another form, and one which should be used at every service, is the read devotional prayer. Here is the secret of the strength of the Church of England. The great prayers of the Church universal should act as guide, and no minister should suppose that any "free" prayer can take its place. The third prayer-form is that when the minister speaks for his people freely and "without book", expressing the problems and joys encountered every day by the members of his flock. This prayer is not to be left to the inspiration of the moment, but is to be hammered out in the study from the materials gathered in pastoral work and on his knees, written out in full but left in the study that the minister's soul may be free from its shackles, free to express whatever inspiration may add.[1]

2. Church Union:

Guthrie was above all a Christian in the catholic sense of that term, then a Protestant, then a Presbyterian, and lastly a Free Churchman. Had his lot been cast a century later he undoubtedly would have been in the forefront of the

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1 Sundays Abroad, pp. 264-71.

ecumenical movement. This is not to say that he was not a loyal and vigorous supporter of his own denomination; in this his Free Church record speaks for itself. But it does mean that he did not feel that the Free Church was beyond criticism or that it could not benefit by closer relations with her sister Protestant churches.

His boyhood in his mother's Secession Church, his student experience in Paris, his extensive philanthropic endeavors which showed such a grand disregard (and even contempt) for sectarian boundaries, his broad travels in other lands, and his naturally generous nature all contributed to a catholicity of outlook which marked few of his brethren in equal degree. He saw every man as either his brother in Christ or as a potential Christian--some in spiritual need, some in physical need and some lacking in both. The Church he conceived to be a servant to minister to those needs, and when denominational jealousies and sectarian bigotries hampered and thwarted that service he publicly deplored the fact with his accustomed zeal. It was his thought that . . .

> . . . if any man's sorrows need our sympathy, his bodily or spiritual wants our help, let us think no more of asking whether he belongs to our country or family, our party or church, than if we saw him stretching out his hands from the window of a burning house.[1]

After his death every newspaper and periodical without

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1 The Parables, p. 92.

exception dwelled at length on the catholicity of this man. One of the least effusive of these adequately expresses the sentiment of all:

> He was Broad Church, in a favourable sense of the term. He possessed the good which exists in Broad Churchmen, without those faults to which they owe their name. He did not, like them, try to widen the strait gate, but on the other hand, he never sought to narrow it, by making too much of non-essentials.[1]

With such a broad (but thoroughly orthodox) view of the Church, Guthrie early entered the fight for Church union. His pleas are to be found throughout his works, but especially in his Unspoken Speech for Union which was published and widely circulated in 1867. As one of the more prominent doctors who presided at the birth of the Free Church, he used his influence that the Standards of that Church should not preclude union with other Presbyterian bodies.[2] Long before there was any general movement toward union he publicly expressed his desire that union with the United Presbyterian Church be pressed as a matter of urgency.[3] This desire on his part may be summed up in the words he used even before the Disruption and at a time when the Scottish Church was in a turmoil of internal agitation:

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1 The Christian Observer and Advocate, 1875, p. 580. Cf. Supra pp. 92-3.

2 Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, V, 102.

3 William Ewing, editor, Annals of the Free Church of Scotland, 1843-1900, I, 179.

> I trust that it will be with us and our brethren, as with two pieces of gold. Take them when they are cold,--out of the fire,--try to join them together and they refuse to unite. But cast them into the fire,--fuse them in the furnace, and instantly they run together as one mass. It has been my earnest prayer, and it is my earnest prayer now, and it will be my earnest endeavour, that there may now be more union than heretofore between the various Presbyterian bodies in this country . . . Nay, more . . . my wishes are wider and better still,--I would rejoice at a union, so far as that is possible, with all the Evangelical Churches in the country.[1]

Church divisions he held to be the work of Satan--a shameful calamity indicating how far Christians had strayed from the unifying love of Christ. "Set on fire of hell," he said, the church has burst into many fragments, fragments cherished and maintained by sectarian zealots whose burning but misguided enthusiasm is "kindled of hell." So soon as the Church became purified, so soon would the Church become unified, he concluded.

He insisted upon one reservation, however. No union "should be entertained that involves the smallest compromise either of the doctrines or the morals of our holy faith."[2] Ecclesiasticism, polity and forms of worship are secondary matters--doctrine primary. But his ideas of doctrine were as wide as all those fundamental beliefs which were then held in common by all the evangelical churches. "I admit nothing to

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1 The Claims and Grievances of the Church of Scotland, p. 47.

2 Out of Harness, p. 322.

be of vital importance," he declared, "but a genuine, heaven-born faith . . ."[1] It was his conviction that such a faith in the Saviour was the one essential, that everything else was circumstantial, and that circumstantials should never be allowed to separate those who are one as the mystical body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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1 Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints, p. 330.

THOMAS GUTHRIE

the

PREACHER

"Thomas Guthrie combined the highest rhetorical power with simple and earnest evangelical preaching"

A.J. Symington

CHAPTER IV

THE PREACHER

The Church in Scotland may well be proud of her many sons who have become preachers of exceptional stature during her long and notable career; and not the least of these worthy ministers of distinction was Thomas Guthrie.

Guthrie preached for thirty-four years (1830-1864), beginning his ministry with the rise of Evangelicalism and retiring from the pulpit when new forces were beginning to shake the rigid Calvinistic foundations upon which the message of the Scottish pulpit had rested for a half century. During his active preaching life, for Moderate and Evangelical alike, "stiff credal orthodoxy was absolutely in possession, and would not brook any questioning of the Westminster Standards in the slightest degree."[1] Guthrie's message was the same as would have been heard from most Scottish pulpits during his life-time. It is not in what he said but in the way he said it that Thomas Guthrie will be of more than ordinary interest to the student of his life and work.

Guthrie stood in distinguished and talented company as a preacher in Scotland at this period of her history. Besides being gifted preachers, as a group they show a remarkable diversity of gifts: M'Crie, the historical antiquary; Andrew

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1 J.R. Fleming, op. cit., p. 7.

Thomson, the talented musician; Chalmers, the scientist and philosopher, economist and sociologist; Norman Macleod, the author and philanthropist; James Hamilton, the natural historian; and, of course, Guthrie the philanthropist. To such a list must be added the names of Candlish, Gordon, John Brown, Robert M'Cheyne, Stewart of Cromarty and Macdonald of Ferintosh.

What kind of a preacher was Guthrie? To answer that question is the burden of this chapter, but Guthrie himself did not want to be catalogued; he did not even want to be called a Calvinist (which he was)--he only wanted to be known as a Gospel minister preaching what he felt to be the Word of God. In this, apparently, he succeeded, for no-one has tried to label him as a member of any particular class of pulpit stylists. The following quotation may be said to speak for most of those who have expressed themselves:

> As a preacher, he did not so much belong to any class as he constituted a whole class by himself. Since his appearance he has had many imitators, but when he rose to fame he was, in Great Britain at least, the only one of his kind. He was not an expository preacher, neither could he be called dogmatic or doctrinal. He did not deal very liberally either in what has been termed the hortatory method. But he was what Dr. McCosh has called him, "the pictorial preacher of his age."[1]

He never had any doubts, it seems, about his call to the ministry, and always looked upon that calling as the

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1 W.M. Taylor, op. cit., p. 259.

highest possible position in which God could place any man on this earth. Thus he said:

> I regard a preacher of the Gospel as filling the most responsible office any mortal can occupy. His pulpit is in my eyes loftier than a throne; and of all professions, learned or unlearned, his, though usually in point of wealth the poorest, I esteem the most honourable. That office is one angels themselves might covet.[1]

The vast responsibility of the preacher's office rested most weightily upon him for the reason, as he points out, that "preaching is God's great instrument for converting sinners and edifying saints." Responsibility indeed, he continues:

> I have said that it was impossible to over-estimate the importance of a minister's office. Over-estimate! who can ever estimate it? When a man looks foward to the day when he shall have to give in his account and be reckoned with by God for the souls committed to his charge, it makes one almost repent that he ever undertook this office--so solemn, so weighty, so overwhelming is its responsibility. It casts over every Sabbath not indeed a gloomy, but a very solemn air, and gives to a large congregation something of an awful aspect.[2]

There is one other of his thoughts concerning the ministry which should be noticed before proceeding to the more detailed study to which this chapter is given:

> The great day of judgement will reveal the irreparable loss that souls have suffered from . . . unspiritual and unacceptable pastors--ungodly and careless men--unconverted men--men who, insensible to the value of their own souls, cared nothing for the souls of others--dumb dogs that could not bark--false and faithless shepherds, who prized the flock for nothing but the fleece.[3]

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1 "The Pulpit", Sunday Magazine, May 1, 1871.

2 A Sufficient Maintenance and an Efficient Ministry, pp. 12-13.

3 The Principles of the Disruption, p. 12.

I. THE MAN

Phillips Brooks has defined preaching as "Truth through Personality."[1] Whatever else preaching may be, it certainly includes Brooks' definition. And before we can properly see Thomas Guthrie the Preacher, he must be seen as the Man. Of necessity such a study must be based largely upon the opinions of those who knew him and the impact of his personality upon his contemporaries. Dr. George Philip has said:

> The father, the friend, the citizen, the preacher, the philanthropist, all found vivid and luminous expression in him, and all combined to make him what he was--one of the brightest ornaments of the country which gave him birth.[2]

The many accounts of his physical appearance all speak the same word, and seem to dwell at considerable length upon the fact of his commanding physique. The numerous photographs and engravings and sculptural works on public display and in the possession of his descendants confirm these accounts. He recalled that in Paris he was called "le grand Monsieur" on account of his height, "standing six feet two and a half inches without the shoes." His "powerful and finely-built frame" was a gift of nature. On the Brechin schoolyard it established him as the best fighter among the boys, and at the University of Edinburgh he took particular pains to keep phy-

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1 Phillips Brooks, Lectures on Preaching, p. 8.
2 Daily Review, p. 35.

sically conditioned by regular exercises and wide participation in outdoor sports. His body and limbs, though strong, were long and gave somewhat of an appearance of lankiness if not carelessness. One observer recalls having seen him in a street of his parish in 1847 soon after the completion of the Manse Scheme campaign and after the successful launching of his Ragged Schools:

> One day, when strolling along the High Street of Edinburgh, a long, thin figure . . . was pointed out to us as the Rev. Thomas Guthrie. . . Was it possible that that lank-haired, sallow individual, whose countenance absolutely, at first sight, indicated nothing, and whose appearance reminded us of an Irish hedge-schoolmaster, could be a leader of the Free Church?[1]

His square, broad shoulders supported a large head[2] with abundant black hair which in childhood was lint-white even as it came to be a short while before retirement, and which was somewhat carelessly swept back from his lofty brow. His face, framed in long, bushy side-whiskers, was expressive in the extreme, allowing the flash of genial humor, the tenderness of great sympathy or the hot indignation of righteous wrath to play over it as his responsive nature was alternately moved.

> The grey eyes, bright and piercing, by their quick, almost restless, glances, lent an expression of intense

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1 John Smith, editor, Our Scottish Clergy: Fifty-two Sketches, Biographical, Theological, and Critical, p. 343.

2 ". . . a French shopkeeper was unable to fit [Guthrie] with a big enough hat; I overheard the poor man's baffled groan: 'Mon Dieu! Quelle tete!'." C.J. Guthrie as quoted by R.L. Orr, op. cit., p. 14.

> alertness to the visage. The cheeks were thin and long, the nose prominent, the chin resolute and firm in outline and moulding. The face would, in truth, have left the impression of a somewhat stern and severe character, an idea still strengthened by the shaggy, protuberant penthouses of eye-brows, had it not been relieved by the influence of the wonderfully mobile and expressive mouth. The lips, finely and delicately curved, were so sensitively alive to the emotions of the mind, that almost every feeling could be read by their subtle index. When he smiled the whole features seemed irradiated, every line and wrinkle appearing to laugh in concert.[1]

Hall Caine, the novelist, said: "The memory of his face as seen in my childhood . . . is very vividly impressed upon my mind, so much so that if I were an artist I could at any moment draw it."[2] When Gladstone met Guthrie's son he exclaimed: "I rejoice to see a noble face so strikingly perpetuated."[3]

It is generally recorded that he was careless in the matter of dress, more as a matter of being not impeccable than of being unkempt. Perhaps the following words give some explanation, in his own words, why this was so:

> The oldest associations connected with dress are those of sin and shame. Sin was its beginning, as it is often still its end. It dates from the fall of our first parents, and has led to that of many of their children: and surely there is nothing, either in its roots or in its fruits, to justify us setting our affections on it, or giving it any measure of attention beyond what propriety demands, or comfort and health require.[4]

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1 O. Smeaton, op. cit., pp. 11-12.
2 R.L. Orr, op. cit., p. 101.
3 Ibid., p. 30.
4 Man and the Gospel, p. 325.

One Scottish University professor recently spoke of Guthrie as "this elemental man." That he was. Simplicity was a distinct hall-mark of his character. He disliked anything that tended toward the ostentatious or pompous, and the reason he gave much of the best of his life to aiding destitute children was because he was at heart a child himself. Moving among the great and royal of the land with ease and poise, his attitude and manner changed not the slightest as he mingled freely and lovingly with the wretched outcasts of his home parish. His own home he felt to be his first responsibility, and he so arranged his manifold duties that most of his nights were given to his wife and children. His home was the greatest single delight of his life, and it is quite moving to read the accounts given by not only his children but by visitors as well, of the tenderness and genial gentleness with which he irradiated his home. As he lay near death, he affectionately asked to see his grand-daughter ("my bonnie lamb") that they might sing a "bairn's hymn" which he chose, "Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me; bless my little lamb tonight."

His hospitality was unbounded, and it is said that he literally kept open house. A domestic in his home who was once a servant in a small inn, said to Mrs. Guthrie: "Eh, mem, this house is just like a 'public', only there's no siller comes in!" His gregarious nature revelled in conversa-

tion and sometimes he would become so spirited in telling an anecdote or emphasizing a point that he would take to the floor in animated demonstration or gesture. "His bright smile, his cheery laugh, his varied information, his store of anecdotes, his readiness and felicity of phrase, his broad and genial human-kindness, his conversational gifts, made him a great and general favorite in society--as welcomed in the salons of the noble as in the dwellings of the poor."[1]

This was the man. He loved people--all people. His heart embraced the whole human race, and when they fell far short of his ideals he looked upon them with great pity and compassion but never with scorn. "Dr. Guthrie had a most expansive, loving heart, which won to him, by an irresistible fascination, the hearts of all, . . . and I believe there was no man in the kingdom whom so many regarded as their personal friend."[2] Nor was his personality subject to varying moods. President McCosh makes this remarkable statement: "I have seen him in all sorts of situations, and I never saw his soul flat or depressed. In this respect, I never knew anyone to be compared with him."[3] This truly was an out-going personality that found its joy and purpose in others, and it was quite typical of him to say: "I believe that man to be in some respects most like God whose greatest happiness is to make

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1 Dr. Hanna in the Sunday Magazine, 1873, p. 445.
2 Dr. Thomson in the Daily Review, p. 43.
3 Memoir, p. 300.

others happy." This was Guthrie the philanthropist, the father and husband, the citizen and the minister speaking. Not only was that the way Guthrie felt, but it is the way the public itself looked upon him. As one writer phrased it:

> Harsh and gutteral as the name Guthrie sounds, it always is musical to our ears, because it brings before our minds the image of a man whose many attractive qualities were softened and sweetened by a genial sympathy with and a general spirit of benevolence towards the whole human race.[1]

It would be possible to dwell at length on how this deep humanity manifested itself in both his contagious humor and his melting pathos. These characteristics were to be found in him in an extensive but highly refined degree, especially as they were expressed from the platform where his full personality found unrestricted liberty to reveal itself. But, and by way of illustration, one occasion will serve to demonstrate this fact. President McCosh heard Guthrie speak at a Voluntary Controversy meeting soon after he began his ministry at Arbirlot. The whole audience became convulsed with laughter over one of Guthrie's anecdotes, and a seventy year old man sitting near McCosh arose and protested, "Please, Maister Guthrie, stap, we can stand this nae langer." Guthrie forthwith began to paint a shipwreck scene in vivid detail, and McCosh recalls that "the young women began to hide their tears, and at last the whole audience bowed their heads like

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1 The Christian Observer and Advocate, 1875, p. 573.

bulrushes, with the tears flowing from their eyes."[1] To such scenes, apparently most common under Guthrie, Hanna adds the comment that these alternating changes wrought upon the audience was really just a reflection of that taking place within the speaker; "So marvellously flexible the emotional element [in him] that smiles and sighs and tears and laughter would chase each other across that April heart of his as the shadows and the sunbeams chase one another across the lawn."[2]

But Thomas Guthrie was no baffoon. He was a cultured gentleman of refinement, good taste and breeding. His tact under trying and difficult circumstances often calmed turbulent tempers and emotions which were threatening some good cause. His kind consideration for the feelings of others lent a depth to the polish of his manners which dispelled any suspicion of mere surface sheen. In his writings it is common to find such expressions as, "Courtesy is a great set-off to piety," "Courteousness is a Christian duty." In addressing himself to young ministers he gave this advice:

> Short of a moral crime, nothing is more offensive in a minister than vulgarity; unless, indeed, it be when they swing over to the other side, and we have vulgar gentility and a pompous affectation of high breeding. . . However vulgar themselves, the common people appreciate and admire good breeding and gentle manners in their minister.[3]

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1 W.M. Sloan, Life of James McCosh, p. 62.
2 Sunday Magazine, 1873, p. 444.
3 Memoir, p. 46.

II. CONGREGATIONS AND POPULARITY

Guthrie's Arbirlot parishioners were all weavers or farmers, some rather well-to-do but most of them small crofters tilling soil belonging to others. When he arrived there the spiritual state of the parish was described as decidedly "dead" owing to the fact his predecessor had held the charge for fifty-nine years and had relinquished it only at death in his eighty-seventh year of age. But Guthrie was delighted with his people, and in his Autobiography frequent descriptive references to his rustic parishioners is made. For example: "In respect of industry, sober habits, intelligence, moral conduct, the common people were not behind, if they were not before, those of any parish in Scotland"; "Among this class there were not a few men as remarkable for their native talents as for their piety. They were great readers, devourers of books, and that to good purpose"; and elsewhere he says of them:

> I had a thousand people there, and only one among them that did not regularly attend the house of God, . . . and there was only one man of them who could not read; and he was the wonder of the community. . . With the exception of one man who was an old soldier, and took rather too much on pension day, . . . there was not a person among the working classes who could be called a drunkard, or had any tendency to drink.[1]

Before going to Arbirlot, and while employed in the

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1 The Poor and How to Help Them, p. 4.

Brechin bank, he preached whenever opportunity was afforded him. But the future popular preacher was not then seen in the licentiate. His brother-in-law, Rev. James Burns, recalls these years:

> At this period of his career he was far from being popular as a preacher. He had not acquired the knack of making friends, either in or out of the pulpit. Some of the local critics who heard his trial discourses, gave judgement upon them in terms far from complimentary. . . . His sermons were not really dull, nor could they be objected to on orthodox grounds, but still there was something about them which prevented them from catching the popular ear.[1]

Evidently this state of affairs ceased as soon as he went to Arbirlot. The following quotation from one of his elders makes this plain. Some years after his minister went to Edinburgh, this elder was asked if Guthrie's ministry had made a difference in church attendance at Arbirlot:

> Aye, a terrible difference. She was thin planted in the auld time; but after Maister Guthrie cam', the kirk was filled haigh up and laigh doon. The folk would come miles to hear him. . . There were twa auld women frae Panbride [5 miles distant] in red cloaks, and as there was no seats for them, they sat ever at the foot-step o' the pulpit stair . . . And by-and-by the kirk was untenable . . ; and so an extra aisle was added, and the middle loft put in. . . Thae was grand times, sir, grand times![2]

The congregation at Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh, which he served for three years (1837-1840), was a congregation of ladies and gentlemen who were quite evidently

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1 Quoted by A.J.S., op. cit., p. 21.
2 Memoir, p. 275.

"chiefly of the middle and upper classes." Though he had preached for only seven years in a rural village with no opportunity for addressing more cultured audiences, Guthrie nevertheless captivated these hearers immediately with the same message and in the same manner which had proved its power among the Forfarshire farmers and weavers. On the third Sunday after his arrival at Greyfriars even "the passages were crowded" with eager (and no doubt curious) listeners. One of these listeners has recorded that . . .

> . . . his church was uniformly crowded to the doors; and many a man has stood in the passage to hear him; and, with streaming eyes and throbbing heart, has bowed before the power of his soul-stirring eloquence.[1]

His reputation and popularity was thus established. When he moved to his own St. John's Parish Church he made it a condition that the entire main-floor sittings should be given, without seat-rent, to his parishioners in the Cowgate where the church was located and for whom the church was built. St. John's was forthwith filled with its parish's ragged citizens, and the balcony, opened to "outsiders" at high rents, was quickly taken over by the wealthy and high-born. His popularity soared. People stood in the vestibule out of sight of the pulpit, sat on the pulpit stairs and listened through the ventilators in the attic. Dr. J.W. Alexander of New York described his experience as "fighting my way into

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1 Quoted by A.J.S., op. cit., p. 143.

hear Guthrie through a crowd that almost tore the coat from my back." Dr. Alexander says he waited for nearly an hour before the service:

> Strangers (how truly I comprehend the term!) are admitted only after the first singing. I found myself waiting in a basement with about five hundred others. At length I was dragged through a narrow passage, and found myself in a hot, over-crowded house, near the pulpit.[1]

Here mention must be made of the exceptionally wide variety of people who consistently made up his St. John's congregation and just as consistently swelled it to overflowing. Witnesses to this are many, but the words of Hugh Miller, one of his office-bearers, editor of The Witness and an eminent geologist, will suffice:

> We have witnessed the effect of his sermons on great audiences drawn from all classes, and representative of all degrees of accomplishment and all varieties of mind; from astute lawyers high in the profession, and learned University Professors imbued with the classical and scientific spirit, down to the humblest labouring man and simplest serving girl. We have seen them all equally influenced and borne away by the commanding eloquence of the preacher, and we have ourselves felt the over-mastering grasp of his power.[2]

What could be more remarkable, however, than that this

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1 John Hall, editor, Forty Years' Familiar Letters of J.W. Alexander, D.D., II, 267. It is said that Guthrie "was perhaps the most popular man of the whole Church" at the conclusion of his Manse Scheme campaign, 1847. A.J.S., op. cit., p. 68.

2 Quoted by C.J. Guthrie, "Prefactory Memoir" to Guthrie's Parables, p. xv. His colleague, Dr. Hanna, said: "There is not upon record the account of any such kinds of crowds as those which constituted continuously, for years and years, Dr Guthrie's audiences." Sunday Magazine, 1873, p. 443. Space forbids mention of the numerous great names in this number.

enormous popularity with all classes of people, from peer to peasant, should remain undimmed, undiminished and unabated through thirty-four years of active preaching. People are fickle. The first glow soon dims. The glossy outer varnish soon wears away with time. Mere entertainment soon satiates and even sickens. Novelty's charm quickly vanishes under the pressure of commonplace repetition. Guthrie never felt the sting of fading popularity: the most stringent possible test of a man and his message. Dr. Hanna was a relative, student and biographer of the great Thomas Chalmers, a fact which makes his following words about Guthrie particularly effective:

> Of almost all other popular preachers it has been true, if they have occupied the same pulpit continuously for ten or twenty years, that the crowds which they at first attracted have at last diminished, and that the fixed congregation which remained took its distinct hue and form from that of the ministry which had permanently attached them to itself; the latter indeed a thing realised in the case of every city clergyman of any considerable power. But neither of the two things was true of Dr. Guthrie; the crowds continued undiminished to the last. I believe that there is not on record another instance of popularity continued without sign or token of diminuation for the length of an entire generation.[1]

With it all, however, Guthrie remained humble and unaffected, and his success served only to deepen his sense of responsibility. The writer of this thesis has searched all available material of which he is aware concerning Guthrie

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1 Sunday Magazine, 1873, pp. 442-43.

and, with one exception,[1] has never met with anything which may be construed as derogatory in the slightest or which would tend to impugn the apparently unanimous acclaim which was accorded him by people in every walk of life. "While he was applauded by rich and poor, by learned and unlearned, he was never spoiled by what would have made some men intolerable, but carried with him the same simple, self-forgetting, humble spirit to his grave."[2] "Modesty," said Guthrie, "is the sure pathway to merit, and humility the foundation of all true greatness."[3] Actually he even warned his congregation, for their own good, not to make their preacher an idol:

> The deep shadow of spiritual,darkness may be flung over a congregation, who, allowing the pulpit to come in between them and the cross, think too much of the servant and too little of the Master. . . God will not give his glory to another; and they who in their idolatrous regards set the servant before the Master, place the preacher in a position to intercept that blessing without which Paul may plant and Appolos water, but there is no increase.[4]

That his inordinate popularity was a source of concern to him he expressed in a letter to his sister in 1857:

I sometimes think that little good is doing here among

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1 Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1874, pp. 462-63, was almost vitriolic in its estimate of Guthrie, branding him a self-satisfied, conceited, verbose bigot who "believed to the letter that all the world lieth in wickedness, and that it is by special grace that he and his are different from others . . . Everybody, or almost everybody, whom Dr Guthrie encounters, falls somehow or other into a position of inferiority, . . . not that he loves mankind less, but his own blithe, confident, dauntless personality more."

2 Andrew Thomson in the Daily Review, p. 44.

3 Characters, II, 197.

4 Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints, p. 66.

us, because the people are apt to exalt the servant above the Master. Let us all be abased, so that Christ may be exalted.[1]

III. THE PASTOR

Thomas Guthrie was a pastor first, then a preacher; a pastor, then a philanthropist. It was not until he came to know his people lovingly and intimately that his preaching began to glow with life and fervor; not until the sickening stench of Edinburgh's slums had clung to his clothes and its sighs and cursings had sounded in his ears and heart that the flame of his benevolence sprang into a light set upon a hill not to be hid.

The record of his pastoral work is found on nearly every page of all he wrote. His sermons and pleadings are, in great measure, an endless narrative of his own experiences among people within and outwith his parish bounds. "The world is my parish," exclaimed Wesley; and so might have Guthrie. As he went about his country calling upon Christians to extend the hand of sympathy and charity to the helpless and needy, he went as a pastor. Yet he did not allow his "world parish" to absorb or dissipate that which properly belonged

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1 Memoir, p. 516. An Arbirlot friend wrote to Guthrie that he had just conversed with a mutual friend who "very earnestly exclaimed, 'Ah, David, Maister Guthrie was taken away from us by Providence, to Let us see ourselves, for we did not see his Great Master above him'; meaning, our attachment to the creature too much made us Lose sight of our duty." Ibid., pp. 271-72.

to his own flock. "He was a devoted pastor. The members of his flock saw him at their firesides in hours of grief and hours of gladness, and their love for the tender, faithful minister equalled, if it did not surpass, their admiration for the pulpit orator."[1]

Guthrie had the shepherd's heart. He was naturally emotional and sympathetic, friendly, gregarious and conscientous. An innate quality of sensing the fitness of things permitted him to enter into the experiences of others with tact and ease. It is written of him that "there are very many in whose memory will ever live not only his faithful words, but the tender tones, the tearful eye, the hand laid so kindly on the shoulder as he spoke."[2] An Edinburgh periodical puts it in these words: "He is as gentle and tender as a little girl in his walks abroad."[3] His pastoral heart shines out from a letter he wrote to one of his elders while he was in England (1847-1849) recuperating from his near-fatal heart attack:

> They have my interest in their welfare, my joy in their joys, and my sympathy in their sorrows; and better, far better, I commend them with all affection, and the earnestness of one who feels, in some measure at least, his great responsibility, to the grace and sympathy and love of Him who hath said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."[4]

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1 Ibid., p. 497.
2 Ibid., p. 499.
3 Hogg's Instructor, 1849, p. 402.
4 Memoir, pp. 527-28.

It took not a little of both courage and physical stamina to cope with the pastoral work he assigned himself. Walking the dark, bleak and often brutal closes and wynds, sometimes late at night, was a man's work. On one occasion he walked onto the scene of a murder; at another time, while visiting from room to room high up in an overcrowded tenement, he found himself face to face with a half dozen surly thugs, an incident which admitedly sent his heart into his throat; on another visit he rushed into a room from whence came shrieks and sounds of mortal combat in time to prevent what must have ended in murder. The general scene which surrounded such incidents demanded of the pastor a strong soul as well as a strong body, and it tried his tender nature exceedingly. Here is how he expressed it:

> Those only who have been City missionaries can understand what I had to suffer daily in the course of my parochial visitations. . . It was not disease or death--it was the starvation, the drunkenness, the rags, the heartless, hopeless, miserable condition of the people--the debauched and drunken mothers, the sallow, yellow, emaciated children--the wants, both temporal and spiritual, which one felt themselves unable to relieve--that sometimes overwhelmed me . . .[1]

With him on these visits he carried a notebook which he kept with care and in detail. This is an example:

> Taylor's Land--Mother, 48--Very delicate, sober; often not able to work--splitting wood. Anne 10--Mary 8--shake-down; pawned gown to help rent; also shift, petticoat of mother's, two frocks of girls', bonnet of her own; cut

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1 Ibid., pp. 157-58. Cf. Out of Harness, p. 9.

down bedstead to sell; all to buy food; children would not want it.[1]

He also kept a detailed record of his young communicants, a notebook in which he carefully recorded his impressions of the spiritual condition and doctrinal knowledge of each child. A former Arbirlot parishioner upon hearing that a "Life" of Guthrie was to be compiled, wrote to Guthrie's sons:

> I feel called upon to give my humble testimony to the faithfulness which was manifested by my pastor in admitting me . . . to the Table of the Lord. I remember how, after repeated examination of all the young communicants together, we were taken aside, one by one, at the last interview, and very seriously and faithfully addressed upon the important step about to be taken, before giving us our "tokens" of admission to that sealing ordinance.[2]

His pastoral work was multiplied many times through his happy ability for putting the members of his congregation to work, especially his elders who were always his faithful co-workers. One of his first projects at Arbirlot was to organize a Sunday school and a series of cottage prayer meetings, the latter exclusively under the leadership of his elders who conducted them with only his occasionally having a part. In Edinburgh "he was surrounded by a willing band of elders, deacons, and Sunday-school teachers," all of whom were assigned particular tasks and individuals for whom they were responsible. To him his congregation meant workers:

A thought that presses on me when I cast my eyes over

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1 Ibid., pp. 315-16.
2 Ibid., p. 270.

> some such great assembly, and see all these human faces, is this--What power is here! what an immense moral power! . . . It is impossible to over-estimate, or rather to estimate, the power that lies latent in our churches.[1]

He even felt that it was a matter of considerably more importance that his faithful members spend their time, if they would, visiting in the parish than attending worship on Sunday. Therefore, he said, . . .

> . . . I advise my own elders, instead of attending at two diets of worship on Sundays at Free St. John's, to devote a part of the day to visiting such districts as the Pleasance, and to try what good they can do. I advise every man and woman to do that; and I should be happy to see my church party empty, if I thought the people were so engaged.[2]

IV. THE PREACHER IN HIS STUDY

Guthrie believed that "God never made man to be idle. He was to work even in Eden." If there was a lazy or compromising element in his constitution, this study has failed to reveal it. If he was indefatigable in his pastoral and philanthropic labors, he was none the less unflagging in his preparation for the pulpit. His prodigious work in this field is all the more remarkable for the reason that Hanna has pointed out:

> If there ever was anyone who might have trusted to the spur of the moment for the words to be employed [in the pulpit], it was he. No readier speaker ever stepped upon a platform; but such was his deep sense of the sacredness of the pulpit, and the importance of weighing well every

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1 Ibid., p. 504.
2 Loc cit.

word that should proceed from it, that he never trusted to a passing impulse to mould even a single phrase.[1]

The study for Guthrie meant work, and he had little sympathy with those who thought otherwise about this phase of the minister's duty. "The getting up of two distinct discourses week by week," he declared, "[is] a serious task for any man, and an almost impossible task for a raw young man to do well."[2] Elsewhere he said: "Some young men believe they have genius; but I believe . . . that the finest genius is like the richest soil, if you do not manure it, it will run out."[3] Or this: "The sermons which are made with ease are heard with difficulty."[4] The reason he felt that no pains should be spared in pulpit preparation flows from his view of the importance of preaching:

> What else [but a "by-job"] do they make both of souls and sermons who huddle their preparation for the pulpit into the last day, or days, of the week? When we think for whom the preacher speaks, to whom he speaks, and what everlasting issues may hang on his lips, how that can satisfy his conscience passes my understanding.[5]

He learned that the best and most profitable hours for the study were to be found in the early morning; and, indeed, his day was so planned that the mornings were the only times when he could study. But let him speak for himself:

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1 Sunday Magazine, 1873, p. 442.
2 Memoir, pp. 124-25. Except for twelve years (1840-1852) Guthrie composed only one sermon weekly.
3 J.W. Kirton, The World's Workers, p. 14.
4 Sundays Abroad, p. 77.
5 "The Pulpit", Sunday Magazine, May 1, 1871.

> For some years after coming to Edinburgh, I rose, summer and winter, at five o'clock. By six, I had got through my dressing and private devotions, had kindled my fire, had prepared and enjoyed a cup of coffee, and was set down at my desk; having, till nine o'clock when we breakfasted, three unbroken hours before me. This, being my daily practice, gave me as much as eighteen hours in each week, and--instead of a Friday or Saturday--the whole six days to ruminate on and digest and do the utmost justice in my power to my sermon. A practice this I would recommend to all ministers whether in town or country. It secures ample time for pulpit preparation, brings a man fresh every day to his allotted portion of work, keeps his sermon simmering in his mind all the week through, till the subject takes entire possession of him, and, as the consequence, he comes on Sunday to the pulpit to preach with fulness, feeling, and power.[1]

These study-hours saw him sit down to his task well equipped in heart and mind. He never took up his pen until he had refreshed himself in a time of devotions. The preacher is in no condition to compose a sermon, he said, who has not previously prepared himself through prayer:

> With all our pains, let us never forget how needful, how indispensable for success in the ministry prayer is. . . . Bear in mind, I pray you, that he is best fitted to preach to men dying in their sins who is most steeped in the spirit of Jesus Christ; and he most sure of the blessing whose eyes are ever turned to the hills from whence cometh our aid.[2]

His mind was well-furnished with stores of practical wisdom. It is to be remembered that he dealt in no subtleties of thought or intricacies of reasoning, never soared into any sublime argument, or attempted to fathom the depths of some awful problem. His mind positively rejected the

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1 Memoir, p. 154. "At St. John's vestry I have often had one unbroken spell of nine hours work." Ibid., p. 507.

2 "The Pulpit", Sunday Magazine, May 1, 1871.

metaphysical and purely speculative for the concrete and practical. But he was intensely "scholarly" in one sense: in his exceptional knowledge of nature and human nature, gathered, culled and catalogued by an insatiable inquisitive interest in the world in which he lived. McCosh said that Guthrie's preaching was distinguished by two marked features:

> . . . he showed amazing sense, and great masses of practical wisdom came out. People did not say, but they felt, "that man knows what is what; he knows what is in my heart; he speaks to my experience, to what I have passed through; he knows my labours and my troubles, and I feel that I can trust him and take him as my adviser."[1]

Other critics are in agreement with McCosh. The words of a contemporary (1847) observer enlarges upon this thought:

> A common complaint, and, perhaps, a just one, against the preaching of the age is, that, though generally doctrinal, it never condescends to the affairs of life. . . Such preaching is comparatively rare. Few have attempted it, but most who have earnestly tried it have succeeded. Of these, Mr. Guthrie is, perhaps, as nearly the most successful as any modern teacher. He does not preach about a beautiful abstract code of truth and virtue, keeping it above sublunary matters, but he comes down to daily life and deeds, examines them and tests them by the standard heaven has supplied.[2]

This is important. Guthrie deliberately determined to allow his own practical propensity free expression without feeling bound by the traditional practice of the Scottish pulpit. He had no taste for analyzing doctrine from the pulpit. He sounded forth the doctrines, declared them, but ana-

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1 W.M. Sloane, op. cit., p. 62.
2 John Smith, editor, op. cit., p. 345.

lyzed instead the fruits and deeds which should issue from them.[1]

To his sermon-writing, then, he brought a sound mind and a head-heart insight into that which touches the life of the common man. He did all within his power to make his message plain, simple and telling. Simplicity and clarity require, if not a sort of genius, then hard, concentrated work:

> Let the preacher, like a man in earnest, employ clear and simple language. No man who is drowning calls for a rope, no officer charging a battery addresses his men, in learned and pompous terms; and a minister seeking to save souls, or lead God's people in the good fight of faith, should aim at plainness, directness, perspicuity . . . Say no odd things; but try so to put the ordinary but saving truths of the Gospel that, to use vulgar and yet expressive terms, they may both strike and stick. It is much easier to be obscure and involved than simple . . . In the composition of a discourse, beauty, clearness, and depth are properties which may be all combined and should all be aimed at . . .[2]

What were Guthrie's "tools" for sermon construction? They were about as simple as any artist ever employed--but they were sharp. It is not known what his library contained, but it is fairly obvious that very little of it found its way directly into his sermons. His fellow-contryman, R.L. Stevenson, said that "books are good enough in their own way, but

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1 J.S. Stewart says that the Apostle Paul once conducted "the experiment of philosophizing Jesus; . . . and the failure of the experiment made him more resolute than ever not to change the herald's calling for the apologist's." A Man in Christ, p. 7.

2 Sunday Magazine, May 1, 1871. "Fire low! . . . The mistake . . . is to shoot too high, over people's heads, missing by a want of plainness and directness both the persons they preach to and the purpose they preach for." Quoted by W.G. Blaikie, For the Work of the Ministry, p. 53.

they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life." And Herbert Spencer once dryly remarked that if he had read as much as others, he would know as little as they did.[1] Guthrie would have appreciated those observations. Readers of his works will be impressed with his wide knowledge of history (notably in Sundays Abroad and Out of Harness), medicine, the natural sciences and the biographies of great men. But literature, as such, attracted him little. If he made reference to an individual, it was usually by way of biographical illustration; if he quoted an author (which he seldom did, poetry or otherwise), the lines used were most often quite familiar and did not indicate that he "knew" the author well.[2]

But far and away the keenest, the most often used, the best loved and most prominent tool found in his study was the Bible, which he knew intimately. "His reverent and loving study of Scripture" was the basis of all his sermons; all else was nothing more than a subsidiary contribution. To aid

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1 James Black, The Mystery of Preaching, p. 77.

2 A rather full list of those to whom he referred in his extant sermons:--Southey, Shakespeare, Milton, Kingsley, Tennyson, Cowper (his favorite poet), Goldsmith, Campbell ("the poet"), Burns, Pope, Young, John Newton (life), Livingstone, Baron Bunsen, South (sermons), Judge Hale (life: philanthropist), Baron Humboldt (life), Dr. Johnson, Dugald Stewart, Kane (Arctic explorer), Froissart (Chronicles), Scott, Lord Bacon, Cuvier, Chesterfield (Letters to His Son), Hume, Josephus, Fowell Buxton (philanthropist), Macaulay (History of England), Addison (The Spectator), Reynolds (The Art of Painting), Adam Clarke, Dean Ramsay (Scotch Reminiscences), Wesley (Journal), Whitefield (life and sermons), Matthew Henry, Chalmers, Bunyan, Fox (Martyrs), Dante.

him in its study he used almost exclusively Cruden's Concordance, Chalmers' Scripture References, and the Commentaries of Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott. But "he preferred Cruden and himself to them all--i.e. his own first and fresh impressions of the meaning of the passage he was expounding."[1] He firmly believed that the Holy Spirit would make clear enough any passage of Scripture to which the student devoted heart and mind, and that without scholarly aid. Thus he said:

> "Put not your trust in princes,"--nor in Luther, nor Calvin, nor in Knox, nor Cranmer--"nor in the son of man in whom there is no help."[2]

These, then, were Guthrie's tools. They were in the main as Dr. John Ker summarized it:

> Besides the one Book, there were two Thomas Guthrie was always reading--nature and human nature, not with other men's glasses, but with his own natural eyesight, opened by a genuine, loving interest.[3]

The actual work of sermon composition was, for Guthrie, an unpleasant and arduous chore. "In all my preparations," he admitted, "I frankly confess I experienced 'the pains of labour'; for though the preaching of the sermon usually afforded me with much pleasure, I never or seldom had

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1 Rev. J.C. Burns in the Memoir, p. 264. "We remember," said another, "that he told us . . . that he read through three books every year--the Bible, the Pilgrim's Progress, and four of Scott's novels which he counted as one (The Antiquary, The Heart of Midlothian, Waverley, Kenilworth)." The Congregationalist, 1874, III, 20.

2 Man and the Gospel, p. 212.

3 C.J. Guthrie, op. cit., p. 25.

any in its composition."[1] This art he had to acquire, for his first sermon is as stilted, unadorned and uninteresting as that of any beginner. It is interesting that the way he learned how to compose was by having his Arbirlot Sunday evening youth group discuss his morning's sermon as a part of their program. After this discussion, he said, . . .

> . . . on returning home it was my custom to set myself to see in what features the parts of the discourse that were well, differed from those that were ill remembered; and having found out the faults of the latter, I endeavoured henceforth to avoid them; and on the other hand to carefully cultivate the style of those passages which had engaged the attention and touched the feelings of my hearers. I found this often a mortifying but also a most profitable exercise; and believe--though I set great value on classics, philosophy, and theology--that, so far as the sacred art of preaching was concerned, I owed more to the self instruction I have described than to all the years and money that had been spent on a full University curriculum.[2]

He found another teacher in the homiletics of the Bible. Thus, he averred:

> I turned to study the discourses of the great old prophets, and more especially the teachings of Him, the Prince of preachers, who drew all men after Him . . . Now, what did I find? I found . . . that they clothed their thoughts in familiar language. So, at the expense of being thought unlearned and shallow by fools, I resolved to avoid learned terms, and wherever possible use only the Saxon tongue . . .[3]

This learned simplicity is further expressed in a letter to

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1 "The Pulpit", Sunday Magazine, May 1, 1871.

2 Loc. cit. "I was careful to observe," he relates elsewhere, "by the faces of my hearers . . . the style and character of those parts which had made the deepest impression, that I might cultivate it." Memoir, p. 130.

3 Loc. cit.

another minister:

> Deal in pure, pithy Saxon. Never use a word with Greek, or Latin, or French root if you can find one with the same meaning in your mother tongue. Use as few adjectives as possible; they load and cumber the truth.[1]

As to the mechanics of sermonizing, Guthrie has very conveniently left details of his method:

> Let us open the study door! After fixing on a text, it was my custom to put down on paper, just as they occurred all thoughts, sentiments, figures, and illustrations that seemed pertinent to the subject at hand; very much as a man who has a house to build, tumbles down in rude heaps on the ground wood, stone, lime, slates, and other materials. Nor was it till I had provided a store of matter, and brought some order out of this chaos by arranging all under appropriate heads, that I proceeded to the proper work of composition; leaving always a blank page opposite to the one written on, for such additions and alterations as a careful revision might suggest. On this revision hours were spent, erasing all repetitions, aiming at more logical and lucid arrangements, making obscure expressions clear, toning up the weak parts, and making every description of actors and scenes as graphic as possible. see to it, however, in the first instance, that your discourse is composed of solid matter; it being with sermons as with woods, stones, and metals, the more solid the substance the higher the polish it takes on.[2]

In this work he always had about him what Black calls "the shadow of a listening people."[3] That is, he never wrote a sentence until he had first spoken it aloud to an unseen audience. "When the fire [of writing] burned low and the work grew hard, he left his study, mounted the pulpit, and with

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1 Memoir, p. 507.

2 "The Pulpit", Sunday Magazine, May 1, 1871. Newman Hall said: "I have seen some of his manuscripts with almost every sentence scored, corrected, and sometimes re-written." "Jubilee Remembrances", Sunday Magazine, 1893, p. 488.

3 James Black, op. cit., p. 37.

his marvellous imagination pictured the multitude that Sabbath to Sabbath hung upon his word; pictured their sins and sorrows and hopes; and with this picture of human need in his heart, he went back to his study with a divine baptism."[1] This practice, he said, had great advantages:

> It helps to impart vivacity to your discourse, to save it from dull, long-winded, lumbering sentences, and, without running into the merely conversational, to throw over the whole the charm of a spoken style.[2]

After his sermon was thus fully written down to the last punctuation mark and carefully chosen word, the whole was committed to memory word for word--and in silence. This memorizing (and he had "not a good verbal memory") aided in the work of composition in the following way, he said:

> It was my practice to condemn every passage in the discourse, even those I thought the best, which it required an extraordinary effort to commit to memory. I drew the pen through it--rueful, probably, but ruthless --reasoning thus: if it does not make such an impression on my own mind as to be remembered without much difficulty, how is it to impress others?[3]

The value of committing silently, he explained, was "that the words sounded almost as fresh to my ears as to the people's, and awakening thereby my own emotions, gave naturalness, force, and fire to the delivery."[4] But, from the pew

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1 A.S. Hoyt, The Work of Preaching, pp. 323-24.
2 "The Pulpit", Sunday Magazine, May 1, 1871.
3 Loc. cit.
4 Loc. cit. Travelling to Dun to deliver his first sermon, he was unable to recall much of it to memory. He said to himself: "I have mistaken my profession! I shall never succeed as a preacher!" Memoir pp. 52-3.

of the hearer was this really the case--could he, in truth, deliver a sermon thus without the tell-tale marks of memorization? No-one was in a better position to judge this than his colleague, Dr. Hanna, who said:

> No discourses ever delivered from the pulpit had more the appearance of extempore address. None ever more carefully thought over, more carefully written out beforehand, or more accurately committed to memory. . . There were often phrases, sentences, illustrations, that one on hearing them could scarcely believe to have been other than the suggestion of the moment, linking themselves as apparently they did with something that was then immediately before the speaker's eye. . . The difference in fact that there almost invariably is between written and spoken address, was by his vivid imagination and quick sympathies reduced to a minimum, if not wholly obliterated. Herein lay one secret of his great powers as a preacher.[1]

Guthrie always started his sermons by "fixing on a text," but these teach us little about his sermons. It is no use saying he preached so many times from the Old Testament and so many times from the New. This proves nothing, in his case at least, for his total extant sermons are less than two year's preaching.[2] Also, his sermons for the most part were carefully selected for publication for their continuity; that is, they are sermon series from a limited choice of texts,

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1 Sunday Magazine, 1873, p. 442. W.M. Taylor, op. cit., footnote, p. 261, adds this interesting comment: "I was informed recently by Dr. McCosh that he (Guthrie) frequently, in the heat of utterance, put in passages which were not in the manuscript. But how he was able to resume his prepared discourse at the point at which he broke away to make such a digression is to me a mystery."

2 This study of Guthrie has located a total of one hundred and thirty-one of his sermons.

indicative of no particular fondness for certain texts or parts of the Bible.[1] It may or may not be inferred from this that he was given to preaching sermons by series, but it is not known that these were actually preached in unbroken series. He suggests that, like Jesus, preachers should occasionally take their texts from elsewhere than the Bible, "instead of keeping to the unvarying routine of text and sermon with formal divisions"[2]--but, so far as is known, he did not follow his own suggestion. Generally his texts clearly state the whole proposition of the sermon, and practically always furnish the subject or title. For instance, the sermon "The Grace of Faith" is from the text, "Now abideth faith"; and the title "The Lamb of God" is a sermon from, "Behold the Lamb of God." Here it may be mentioned that his subjects are always simple, short and obvious, and, like his texts, never novel or startling, nor do they even create a legitimate curiosity. Occasionally the textual relationship to the sermon, to say the least, is indirect. The sermon, "The Love of Christ", for example, is based on David's words concerning his love for Jonathan, "Thy love to me was wonderful." His introduction, in this instance, tells of the love between

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1 Examples: The Gospel in Ezekiel, 22 sermons from Ezekiel 36; The City, Its Sins and Sorrows, 4 sermons from Luke 19:41; Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints, 20 sermons from Colossians 1; Our Father's Business, 11 sermons from Luke 2:49.

2 Speaking to the Heart, p. 3.

these two men, and then he makes the transition thus: "As we muse on these words, Gilboa vanishes, and Calvary rises into view." Such indirect texts, however, are the exception, and as a rule the texts he chose needed not to be explained or altered in the slightest. Usually they are plain statements of fundamental truths--"God is love", "Pray without ceasing", "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord"--and could be used even without reference to their context.

What has been said of his texts cannot, however, be applied to his introductions. They are carefully calculated to rivet the attention, excite curiosity and elicit the interest from the very first. He is determined, it seems, to draw before the mind's eye that which, as he expressed it, would "both strike and stick." This was his ordinary method, rather than beginning indifferently, explaining the text, quoting authorities or otherwise clearing the stage, so to speak, for the body of the sermon. For this purpose it was generally his custom to draw upon his rich store of vivid illustrations, and through them open the fascinating door of entrace to the garden wherein grows the tree of life. Often there is no obvious connection between the text and the introduction, or the subject and the introduction; indeed, their relationship at first hearing seems quite remote. No doubt this was done with the deliberate intention of gaining the curiosity and interested attention of the congregation.

An illustration will demonstrate this fact:

SUBJECT: "Man's Great Duty"
TEXT: "Lay hold on eternal life." (I Timothy 6:12)
INTRODUCTION:

> On the deck of a floundering vessel stood a negro slave--the last man on board, he was about to step into the lifeboat at her last trip. She was already loaded almost to the gunwale; to the water edge. Observed to bear in his arms what seemed a heavy bundle, the boat's crew, who had difficulty to keep her afloat in such a roaring sea, refused to receive him unless he came unemcumbered, and alone. He pressed to his bosom what he carried in his arms, and seemed loathe to part with it. They insisted. He had his choice--either to leap in and leave that behind him, or throw it in and stay to perish. He opened its folds; and there, warmly wrapped round, lay two children whom their father, his master, had committed to his care. He kissed them; bade the sailors carry his affectionate farewell to his master, and tell how he had faithfully fulfilled his charge; and then, lowering the children into the boat which pushed off, the dark man stood alone on that sinking deck--and bravely went down with the foundering ship.

Here there is no apparent relation between the subject or text and the introduction. He is working by contrast: whereas there was no room for the slave (or children) in the lifeboat, there <u>is</u> room for all in Christ. Therefore, it is "Man's Great Duty" to "Lay hold on eternal life" where none is excluded.

Sometimes the introductions are certainly too long--[1] the porch is as big as the house, as Sangster put it. But as a rule he uses a well-balanced two to four pages, out of an average total of about twenty pages, to launch his discourse,

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1 The sermon "Man an Object of Divine Mercy" has an introduction of eight and one half out of a total of twenty pages; "Man Sinning" is introduced by exactly half of its eighteen pages.

never, however, omitting the introduction altogether.

Guthrie's sermon outlines are as obvious and prosaic as it is possible for them to be. As America's Dr. Macartney expressed it, "The outlines are just what a teacher of homiletics would get from a middler or a senior class."[1] Newman Hall once asked a friend how he liked the preaching of a Welsh minister he had recently heard. The reply was, "There was nothing peculiar in the sermon--old bones!"[2] Guthrie's outlines and sermon divisions are certainly "old bones". Any of his sermons will serve as an example.

SUBJECT: "Spiritual Vision"
TEXT: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (Psalm 119:18)
INTRODUCTION: A story of a child born blind.
I. We are all born spiritually blind.
II. This blindness has certain characteristics:
1. It deprives of glimpses of God's beauty.
2. It makes its subjects painfully dependent.
3. It exposes them to deception.
4. It exposes them to danger.
III. Opened eyes behold wondrous things out of God's law.
IV. Only God can open our eyes.

Paley said, "Disdain not the old fashion of dividing your sermon into heads; a discourse which rejects these aids to perspicuity will turn out a bewildering rhapsody, without aim or effect, order or conclusion."[3] Guthrie constructed his outlines clearly and simply in order to aid the work of memo-

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1 Clarence E. Macartney, "Thomas Guthrie", Princeton Theological Review, 1920, pp. 383-84.
2 Newman Hall, op. cit., p. 489.
3 Quoted by C.E. Macartney, op. cit., p. 383.

rization and that the congregation should experience no difficulty in following and remembering the discourse.

Few if any of his sermons conclude without a direct personal invitation and/or warning to the sinner, or a stimulating challenge to the saint. Every sermon has its application, sometimes elsewhere but usually at the end; every theme an arrow aimed at a particular target. The sermon, "The Good Fight" ("I have fought a good fight." II Timothy 4:7), concludes by calling upon both sinner and saint to join in the battle:

> I wish to enlist you as soldiers of the Cross. . . It is a fight for your soul; it is a battle for heaven; it is bleeding slaves up in arms against their old masters; doomed prisoners fighting their way to the open door, and dashing themselves on those who would bar their escape to life and liberty. Break away from your sins; and, taking unto you the whole armour of God, throw yourselves into the battle.

Occasionally he closes with a stanza or two of a hymn or a few lines of poetry. More often than not the last sentence is a quotation from Scripture; scarcely ever, however, with the words of his text.

His literary style was very much his own. His insistance upon the use of plain, simple and readily understood words of the Saxon tongue has already been noted. He believed in speaking that which the average man could easily grasp, using as few adjectives as possible in doing so. Guthrie's readers will seldom have to refer to the dictionary. Yet there is that about his style that is definitely florid and

ornate. But Guthrie was an eloquent orator, and he wrote as he spoke. Few other preachers could deliver his sermons just as they are written beca-use few other preachers have possessed his oratorical style. These sermons were written with the thought that they would be delivered by his own and living voice, and, though there are passages that may be said to be flowery, there is unction and emotion in them, free-flowing and often--very often--genuinely poetic. Sometimes this makes for long apostrophes which seem to well out from the heart of some religious poet. The following sentence is characteristic:

> How vast the work of Providence! How great that Being whose hand paints every flower, and shapes every leaf; who forms every bud of the trees, and every infant in the darkness of the womb; who, with a parent's care, feeds each crawling worm, and watches over insect life; who throws open the golden gates of day, and draws around a sleeping world the dusky curtains of the night; who measures out the drops of every shower, the whirling snow-flakes, and the sands of man's eventful life; who determines alike the fall of a sparrow and the fate of a kingdom; and so overrules the tide of human fortunes, that whatever befall him, come joy or sorrow, the believer says, It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.[1]

Broadus said that "every man's punctuation must be to some extent his own, as it indicates his mode of constructing sentences."[2] Guthrie uses punctuation profusely. The following account of the "Last Day" shows something of his picturesque speech as well as his use of the dash:

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1 Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints, p. 293.

2 J.A. Broadus, A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, p. 356.

> Amid circumstances of terrible and transcendant sublimity--thunders that rend the skies--the perpetual hills passing away--burning mountains hurled into boiling seas --the sun dying--the starry heavens rolling up like a scroll--all eyes fixed on the great white throne.[1]

Or the use of the exclamation mark:

> Happy man! he sleeps at night in God's arms; happy man! in every trial he weeps on God's bosom! happy man! although his fare be but a crust of bread and cup of water . . .[2]

Most of his questions and exclamations tend to come toward the end of the sermon, at the last of a heading or division, or wherever the point at hand is receiving application.

It should also be noted that he makes much use of quotations from the Bible--often without reference to their context and simply because, as words or phrases, they fit in with what he is saying. On occasion he slips into the use of old English personal pronouns with perfect ease.

The most singular characteristic of his sermon style and structure is his abundant use of illustrations. "If one were asked to describe the preaching of Thomas Guthrie in the briefest possible manner, there is one word which would irresistibly come to our lips, and we should be constrained to say, it is pictorial preaching."[3] McCosh called him "the pic-

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1 Ezekiel, p. 365. This sermon, "The New Life", Part II, contains 106 dashes, 26 exclamation points, and 21 question marks.

2 Ibid., p. 328.

3 John Edwards, Nineteenth Century Preachers and Their Methods, p. 56.

torial preacher of the age."[1] Hoyt declared him to be "the prince of illustrators."[2] Taylor relates that "the restless, erratic Blackie, Professor of Greek at the University," said that he sat under Guthrie "to hear the most Homeric descriptions which this age has ever listened to."[3] Many another such witness could be cited, but these will serve to show that Guthrie was considered a master in the use of illustration.

Dr. Boyd-Carpenter, Bishop of Ripon, observed that "imagination, no less than reason, is God's gift. It is the power by which dulness or baldness is avoided."[4] God liberally endowed Guthrie with imagination, and dulness or baldness had no place in his sermons. Sir William Hamilton remarked to McCosh that "Your friend Dr. Guthrie is the best preacher I ever heard." McCosh expressed surprise that so great a logician should think so, to which Hamilton replied, "Sir, he has the best of all logic; there is but one step between his premise and conclusion," and that step an illustration.[5] "In listening to him," said Dr. Hanna, "scenes and images passed in almost unbroken succession before the eye, always apposite, often singularly picturesque and graphic, frequently

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1 Memoir, p. 266.
2 A.S. Hoyt, The Work of Preaching, p. 244.
3 W.M. Taylor, op. cit., p. 265.
4 Quoted by A.S. Hoyt, op. cit., p. 241.
5 Memoir, p. 267. Hoyt, op. cit., p. 244, mistakenly attributes this remark to Lord Jeffrey.

most tenderly pathetic."[1]

Guthrie had to learn the art of illustration. Nothing in his earliest discourses foreshadow the master illustrator he was to become. His "Paris Journal", however, shows that he was quite gifted, even as a student, in picturing the scenes of the French capital. At Arbirlot he soon saw that his sermons were too dry. His Sunday evening youth meeting there soon taught him that the young people seemed to remember best his illustrations. This marks the beginning of that peculiarity of style which more than any other feature stands out in his preaching. It was at this time, he said, . . .

> . . . when I went to Arbirlot, . . . I set myself vigorously to study how to illustrate the great truths of the gospel, and enforce them, so that there should be no sleepers in the church, no wandering eyes, but everywhere an eager attention. Savingly to convert my hearers was not within my power; but to command their attention, to awaken their interest, to touch their feelings, and instruct their minds was--and I determined to do it.[2]

For his models in this craft Guthrie admits none but the preachers of the Bible, and pre-eminently the example of Jesus. To this he adds:

> Taught by such models, and encouraged in my resolution by such authorities, I resolved to follow, though it be at a great distance, these ancient masters of the art of preaching; being all the more ready to do so, as it would be in harmony with the natural turn and bias of my own mind.[3]

With his determination and "natural turn and bias" of

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1 Sunday Magazine, March, 1873.
2 Memoir, p. 129.
3 Ibid., p. 130.

mind, he forthwith began to lay everything under tribute to accomplish his objective. His frequent references to The Art of Painting by the noted artist, Sir Joshua Reynolds, is not without significance. He felt that the preacher was, as well as the painter on canvas, a pictorial artist. It is told that a painter, after having one of his works criticised by Guthrie, said to him, "Dr. Guthrie, remember you are a preacher and not a painter." To this remark Guthrie replied, "Beg your pardon, my good friend--I am a painter; only I paint in words, while you use brush and colours."[1] In his writings such remarks as, "The painter, to make the principle figures of his picture stand out from the canvas, throws the background into shade,"[2] are met with often. Painting and preaching, he felt, could stir the emotions of man:

> No man ever looked on the laughing face of a painting but he smiled--the grief of colours brings tears to our eyes--the anger of the canvas raises corresponding emotions within us; and in one of his pictures we have felt the hand of Wilkie run over all the strings of our heart. And in the same way it is impossible to see a man who believes what he utters, and feels what he says, without an inclination to bring our faith and feelings into unison with his own. If this is true in any place, it is above all places true in the pulpit.[3]

Hanna says it was the common prediction soon after Guthrie went to Edinburgh that his copious use of illustration

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1 Ibid., p. 507.
2 Sundays Abroad, p. 274.
3 Guthrie, "Memoir of Robert Coutts", Coutts' Sermons, p. xii.

would soon exhaust his supply. But, Hanna continued, . . .

> . . . he lived to prove that his own peculiar vein was one too deep to be exhausted, too fertile to become barren--one that could be constantly replenished, and that beautifully repaid the hand of the cultivator. It was as little true that you could stop or dry up the spring of story-telling in Dickens or in Scott as you could that of his own form and kind of illustration in Dr. Guthrie.[1]

The reason his flow of illustration never abated was that his sources were exhaustless. He was insatiably interested in nearly everything, and as mankind, nature, history, the Bible and biography are limitless mines of illustrative materials, so Guthrie, delving with wondrous curiosity into each and all of these, was always plentifully supplied. He humbly felt, as he said, that the meanest and most common things and people had much to teach the willing learner:

> I think that no knowledge is to be despised, nor any opportunity of acquiring knowledge to be lost. No man knows to what use he may turn it. We never trod the most savage shore, but amidst its sea-beaten rocks--we never travelled over the barest moorland, but amidst its mountain, but among its frowning cliffs we found some object of beauty, of interest, of value to carry home. The bee sucks honey from every flower; and he who kindly stoops to hold converse with the rudest man and the rudest mind will learn something he never knew before.[2]

Nature, his greatest illustrative source (with the possible exception of the Bible), he loved and studied almost with a passion, and made her do a mighty work in his sermons.

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1 Sunday Magazine, 1873, p. 442. Two volumes, Gems of Illustration from the Sermons and Other Writings of the Rev. Thomas Guthrie and Platform Sayings, Anecdotes, and Stories of Thomas Guthrie, have been published by anonymous editors in New York (1884) and London (1864) respectively.

2 Discourse at the Opening of Chambers' Institute, p 18

Throughout his life he enjoyed visits to his uncles' farms near Brechin, and when he moved to the agrarian parish of Arbirlot, he was doubly delighted that he would also be living near the fascinating sea.[1] His sons said, "We have seen him so intent on watching under the shade of a fir-wood, the busy population of a dissected ant-hillock, that he was insensible to the fact of a whole hour's having passed away."[2] The following illustration will serve to show his keen observational powers and the apt use he makes of it. Nature and man, he says, are at one in hating death and loving life:

> I have walked down a long summer day across moor, mountain, and woodland, nor seen a sign of death. No shriek of pain, nor groan of agony, disturbed the melody of nature; and where the merry cricket chirped among the grass, and the lark sang in bright skies, and cattle lowed in fragrant pastures, and its silver tenants leaped and played in the stream, and flowers with their ten thousand golden censers offered up odours of praise to God, and all nature rejoiced and revelled in the possession of life, no withering skeleton crumbled beneath my feet. No sign of death was there. As if God not only had no pleasure in the death of any creature, its evidences, the footsteps of this fell destroyer, are speedily effaced. Let bird or beast fall, and curious creatures come creeping forth to do the sexton's office; the denizens of air and earth seize on the lifeless body; so that if death is quick to seize on life, life is no less quick to seize on death--nature covering with a green and flowery shroud all that moulders and decays; changing foul corruption into beauty, and the lifeless corpse of one creature into the pregnant womb of ten thousand lives![3]

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1 "To this position of my first parish, where for seven years I was familiar with the great ocean in all its ever changing phases, is due, no doubt, the numerous allusions to it which occur in my sermons and speeches." Memoir, p. 97.

2 Ibid., p. 291.

3 The Way to Life, p. 375.

His Biblical illustrations were taken from the most familiar portions of Scripture: a tribute to his extraordinary skill in making these well-worn paths shine with new interest and life. The Bible for him was a living Book whose characters and times and events are ever timely and instructive. Especially was he partial to the hardy characters of the Old Testament, and his two volumes, Studies of Character from the Old Testament (issued in two series),[1] show how real and pertinent and "contemporary" these ancient men and women were to Thomas Guthrie. He averred that . . .

> . . . the Christian will derive great advantages from studying those excellent models of piety and virtue which are found in the biographies of the Bible. Here is a gallery of admirable paintings. Here the student of holy and heavenly arts finds it as profitable as pleasant to pass hours of devout meditation. "All Scripture is given . . . for instruction in righteousness." But no part of it more so than the lives of the grand old saints of old.[2]

His own full and varied experience formed the well from which he drew numerous incidents and stories of the foibles and struggles of people who had crossed his path--particularly those illustrations deep in pathos and compassion. His books, The City, Its Sins and Sorrows and Seed-Time and Harvest of Ragged Schools, are virtually a catalogue of such experiences.

His picturesque speech was not confined to lengthy il-

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1 These studies of sixteen characters originally appeared in serial form in the Sunday Magazine.

2 Characters, I, 4.

lustrations. Sometimes he lights up the truth in the flash of one quick stroke. For example: the power of prayer is demonstrated by Joshua as he "stopped the glowing axles of the sun"; some friendships are as "fragile a-s the flowers the winter frost traces on our windows"; the shuffling beggar is "a moving heap of rags"; the freely offered Gospel "throws a zone of mercy around the world"; clouds are "heaven's treasuries of rain"; "France, without the Bible, is like a top--it keeps itself up by perpetual revolutions."

Guthrie even uses illustrations to illustrate why he used illustrations! "An illustration is like a balloon which makes a heavy point rise." "An illustration will, like a nail, often hang up a thing which otherwise would fall to the ground." "The story, like a float, keeps [the truth] from sinking; like a nail, fastens it in the mind; like the feathers of an arrow, makes it strike, and, like the barb, makes it stick."[1] He advised that the preacher should ever be mindful of what he called "The Three P's"--Proving, Painting, and Persuading. "Man has a three-fold character," he reasoned, "he is a being possessed of reason, of affection, and of imagination; he has a head, a heart, and a fancy."[2] One authority has said that Guthrie's whole emphasis was on the

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1 Memoir, pp. 507-508; Anonymous, editor, Gems of Illustration from Guthrie, "Preface", (n.p.).

2 The Parables, p. 3.

painting;[1] another, on the other hand, declared that Guthrie was able to embrace all three "P's" in a single picture.[2] The truth, certainly, lies somewhere between these two assertions from these critics.

Did Guthrie overdo this craft in which he was an acknowledged master? Several homiletical judges thought he did, the following being the severest critic of them all:

> [Illustration] is the place where the critic finds [Guthrie] most vulnerable. He overdid the pictorial. Very often the thing which he wanted to illustrate was forgotten in the wondrous beauty of his description of the illustration. . . Guthrie was often too diffuse for the highest power. Besides, a sermon that is all illustration together cannot but be defective in instruction. . . Flowers are good, but we like a little fruit as well . . A discourse that is all illustration will soon wither in the memory, and become as neglected as one of last week's bouquets.[3]

Black, however, thought that he used illustration "generously and finely. If only you use it finely, it does not matter so much how generously you use it."[4] Blaikie said that he used "copious" illustrations "to the greatest purpose, for a greater master of illustration has never appeared in the pulpit."[5] The modern preacher reading Guthrie's sermons would undoubtedly feel that here was a craftsman who

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1 C.E. Macartney, op. cit., p. 395.
2 A.S. Hoyt, op. cit., p. 244.
3 W.M. Taylor, op. cit., pp. 262-64. Other but milder criticisms: George J. Davies, Successful Preachers, pp. 439-450; Newman Hall, op. cit., p. 488; John Edwards, op. cit., pp. 56-7.
4 James Black, op. cit., p. 111.
5 W.G. Blaikie, For the Work of the Ministry, pp. 59-60.

knew his art, but he would probably also feel that there is too much of the ornate and not enough of the chaste. However this may be, a century ago there is no question but that the people liked it very much. And on this subject it is only just that Guthrie be allowed the final word:

> While this faculty is not to be allowed to run away with a man--to be over indulged--(in which I have no doubt I have often sinned), it is a telling one, and valuable for the highest ends.[1]

V. THE PREACHER AS ORATOR

> The scene when he preached in St. John's is photographed on the memory of multitudes. What a hush of expectancy on the upturned faces of the people, as, entering from a side door, the preacher is seen pressing with eager step through the crowd who fill the passage from the vestry to the pulpit! The swing of the broad shoulder, the head bent foward, the look of earnestness on the flushed countenance, all tell of a man who feels he has come forth on an important errand, and is straitened till it be accomplished.[2]

Up to this point this study has been largely confined to a consideration of Guthrie's published sermons. But published sermons in general, as he said, "labour under a great disadvantage. They lack the advantage of the known man and the living voice, and the feelings of a full heart breaking through the veil of flesh . . ."[3]

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1 Memoir, p. 507. In his sermon, "True Religion", are 52 illustrations, including metaphors and similes, as follows: nature, 12; general observation, 10; Bible, 8; the sea, 6; figures of speech, 5; medicine, war, biography and story, 2 each; poetry, history and literature, 1 each.

2 Ibid., p. 513.

3 Guthrie, "Memoir of Coutts", op. cit., p. xiii.

Those who have endeavored to speak of his eloquence are all agreed in this, that Thomas Guthrie was a rhetorician of the first magnitude. When he went to Edinburgh at the age of thirty-four, it was said that "he had established for himself a reputation as an orator second to none in the Church of Scotland, Dr Chalmers alone excepted."[1] Ten years later Lord Cockburn made this entry in his Journal: "Next to Chalmers, Guthrie is now the best pulpit orator in Scotland."[2] But it was not until several years later that "the powerful prince of Scottish preachers"[3] reached his full stature, and stood quite apart from his brethren in the field of pulpit eloquence. It may be taken as a general opinion of that time that "for many years he was by far the most eloquent preacher in Scotland."[4] Others would not confine his superiority to Scotland alone. Dr. Boyd of St. Andrews said, "There never was a greater orator than Guthrie";[5] and the old, conservative London Times, speaking for Britain as a whole, declared him to be "the greatest of our pulpit orators."[6] With these

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1 A.J.S., op. cit., p. 30. Chalmers was usually the standard by which Guthrie was measured. Yet they were only partial contemporaries; they died 26 years apart.

2 Henry Cockburn, op. cit., II, 173.

3 John Edwards, op. cit., p. 63.

4 Chambers's Cyclopedia of English Literature, III, p. 342.

5 Quoted in the "Memoir" in Guthrie's Parables, p. xiv.

6 September 28, 1860. The Times is quoted as calling him "the most eloquent orator in Europe." Anonymous, "Preface", Gems of Illustration, (n.p.). He is "the most sensational and pictorial speaker, either in the pulpit or on the platform, that the world has ever produced." The Times quoted by G.J. Davies, op. cit., p. 439.

comments in mind, the general impression of his eloquence upon one of his auditors will prove of interest:

> We know few speakers who can rise to the sublime more easily--who oftener do so. But his eloquence is his own; it belongs to no school. Any notion you may form of it from Chalmers' wild whirlwind bursts, Thomson's impassioned episodes, or Hall's grand rising passages, will come far short of the case. We might call it electric, for certainly such it resembles in unexpectedness and effect. You are startled suddenly--a wild thrill runs through your frame--some dazzling luminous sentences roll out vividly before you, and the speaker's voice again resumes its ordinary level. But these passages are not like a musket report, ringing in your ear for a moment, then dying away in harmless echo; once heard they cannot easily be forgotten.[1]

According to Candlish, men of talent in thought and speech are often raised up to fill the world's pulpits, "but genius, real poetic genius like Guthrie's, comes but once in many generations. We shall not look upon his like soon, if ever."[2]

Little of this genius, however, showed itself during the five years he was a licentiate. In the first sermon he delivered in his home town of Brechin, he recalled, "I felt for a moment as if my tongue would cleave to the roof of my mouth." And his brother-in-law remembered that on this and following occasions, Guthrie's pulpit style was rough and often near being uncouth, "the graces, whether of style, pronunciation, or action, were considerably neglected, if not despised."[3] Guthrie knew this and said afterwards, "I always

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1 John Smith, editor, op. cit., p. 346.
2 In the Daily Review, p. 33.
3 Memoir, pp. 223, 264-65.

felt greatly dissatisfied with my own performances . . ."

But at Arbirlot, even from the first sermon, his pulpit power was manifest, as is picturesquely related by one of the parishioners:

> Maister Guthrie, he gi'es oot the text . . . and syne he shut-to the book. At that, auld William Airth . . . stood up in his seat the way sometimes we was allowed in thae days, if ye'd been sittin' ower lang. He was reckoned a terrible critic upon men. Up he started till his feet, and I tell ye, he stood like a brod [board] the while time, and forgot to sit doon! So, when the kirk cam' oot, a'body was gatherin' at the end o' the brig, and the foremost cries to auld William Airth, the smith, "Weel, William, what do you think the day, you that's heard sae mony preachers, what do ye think o' him?" Says William, pressin' past them, and speaking to himsel' like, "That's the preacher, lads, that's the preacher!" I mind o'd weel: he just did wonderfu' at the very first.[1]

Guthrie records that he early considered the importance of good delivery:

> I had, when a student in divinity, paid more than ordinary attention to the art of elocution, knowing how much the effect produced on the audience depended on the manner as well as the matter; that, in point of fact, the manner is to the matter as the powder is to the ball. I had attended elocution classes winter after winter, walking across half the city and more, fair night and foul, and not getting back to my lodgings till about half past ten. . . I had heard very indifferent discourses made forcible by a vigorous, and able ones reduced to feebleness by a poor, pithless delivery. I had read of the extraordinary pains Demosthenes[2] and Cicero[3] took to cultivate their manner . . .; and I knew how, by a masterly

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1 Ibid., p. 273.

2 Demosthenes said the three main points of eloquence are: "First, delivery; second, delivery, and third, delivery." Arthur Allan, The Art of Preaching, p. 23.

3 Cicero said: "To know what we should say, and to know in what order, is indeed a thing of great importance; but to know how we must say it, is a thing of much greater importance." James Black, op. cit., p. 98.

and natural use of these, Whitefield could sway the crowds . . .[1]

To him pulpit competence was not merely an optional ability of the preacher's art: it was fundamental. The importance he placed upon it is revealed in a letter to the students of an American theological seminary:

> There is nothing binding a man for life to this sacred, any more than to any secular, profession, if he finds himself unable to discharge his duties. The dog that cannot, as much as that which will not, bark is no fit guardian of the flock. . . It is right, honourable to themselves and loyal to Christ and his cause, for incompetent persons to abandon the pulpit; however good and devout men they may be, when it is proved that God has not bestowed on them the requisite qualifications, to continue there is not to follow Providence, but to fly in the face of it.[2]

One of the chief qualities of Guthrie's personality was his overflowing humor and wit and sparkling geniality. This quality found ample expression on the platform, but in the pulpit it was an entirely different matter. There the slightest trace of his natural humor was never allowed to show itself. During the whole of the twelve years they were colleagues, Hanna said, "so completely did Dr. Guthrie hold this faculty in check that I never saw even the shadow of a smile pass over the congregation of Free St. John's."[3]

He came to his pulpit like an Old Testament prophet

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1 Memoir, p. 128. "The manner is to the matter as the powder is to the ball" is widely quoted by the authorities.
2 "The Pulpit", Sunday Magazine, May 1, 1871.
3 Sunday Magazine, March, 1873.

"burdened" with the weight of the message he carried.[1] What he had to say could not be uttered with a cool formality; but rather, he spoke "as a dying man to dying men." He was impatient with those who were afraid of betraying something of enthusiasm and urgency in the pulpit. To these he said:

> People may talk of extravagance, and want of taste and refinement. But does the mother when she hears her infant scream, and sees it borne away before her eyes on the roaring flood, bear herself calmly and coolly as she takes measures to save its life? . . . We should oftener see [more enthusiasm] in the pulpit--in the manner, and passions, and fervour, and fire of the preacher, were the messenger of God sufficiently alive to the danger of those he is addressing--addressing, alas! as coolly as if they were in no danger at all . . .[2]

This, he insists, does not mean that taste and refinement are out of place in the pulpit: the preacher is neither clown nor buffoon. "Violence," he said, "never converted, but has often confirmed an opponent--even as a hammer, rudely and unskilfully applied to its point, but rivets the nail it was raised to drive out."[3] Or, as he advised a ministerial associate, "The more easy your manner, without losing the character of seriousness and solemnity, so much the better. Vigour and birr, without roaring and bellowing, are ever to be aimed at."[4]

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1 Newman Hall said of him: "In preaching he suggested the idea of a venerable Jewish prophet, warning against sin and ceremonial, while with glowing fervour proclaiming the boundless love of God." op. cit., p. 488.

2 "God's Message", Sunday Magazine, 1873, p. 282.

3 The Principles of the Disruption, p. 10.

4 Memoir, p. 507.

But "the true secret of effective oratory," he cautioned, is sincerity:

> No polish of style--no brilliant thoughts--no flowers of rhetoric--no flashes of genius, can tell on the mind of an assembly like the power of conveying this impression to the hearers: that the speaker is thoroughly sincere, and, in the words of Mirabeau, "believes every word he says."[1]

Undoubtedly Guthrie knew this from his own experience. Cockburn said of him, "His true charm lies in his simple sincerity."[2] And with this truth, surely, we are brought into the inner chamber of the secret of his oratorical power. "His flashing eye, and flushed brow, and changing expression, denote the earnest action of the inner man."[3] It was the disarming candor of his "passion and compassion", as Cockburn phrased it, that enabled him to grasp the hearts and wills of all and sundry.

Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,"[4] and the truth of His statement was clearly manifested in His servant Thomas Guthrie. Much has already been said of Guthrie's warm-heartedness, and nothing more need be added except to briefly relate it to his pulpit power. "His sympathy! Ah, there was the secret of his marvellous success . . . From the very inmost depths of his great, big, tenderly sympathetic heart, every word of every appeal he

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1 "Memoir of Coutts", op. cit., p. xiii.
2 Henry Cockburn, op. cit., II, 174.
3 Hogg's Instructor, 1849, p. 402.
4 Matthew 12:34.

uttered came welling forth."[1] A contemporary periodical put it in these words:

> He convinces the heart more than the reason, and as we esteem the heart the representative of the noblest part of our religious nature, we look upon Dr Guthrie as one of those who stand upon the highest step of pulpit oratory.[2]

In his delivery he demonstrated deep emotion and freely exercised the right of passionate fervor. Dr. J.W. Alexander of New York, reputed to be a severe critic of pulpit manners, wrote in a letter to his family after visiting Free St. John's:

> [Guthrie has] an impetuous freedom of motion, a play of ductile and speaking features, and an overflowing unction of passion and compassion, which would carry home even one of my sermons; conceive what it is with his exuberant diction and poetic imagery. The best of all is, it was honey from the comb, dropping, dropping in effusive gospel beseeching. I cannot think Whitefield surpassed him in this. You know that while you listen to his mighty voice, broken with sorrow, he is overwhelmed with the "love of the Spirit." . . The audience was rapt and melting . . . and he rose to his highest in the first sentence.[3]

He used pathos in abundance and with consummate skill; it was a part of his nature. That he knew the power of it he admits in these words:

The tears that flow through loving eyes from the inner

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1 O. Smeaton, op. cit., p. 71.

2 Hogg's Instructor, 1849, p. 402. If other critics are correct, W.M. Taylor, op. cit., p. 264, could hardly be further afield than in describing Guthrie's preaching as "deliberate, but rarely, if ever, impassioned."

3 John Hall, editor, op. cit., II, 267.

> and unseen fountains of a Christ-like compassion, have affected hearts which had withstood both the force of argument and the fire of eloquence.[1]

When a friend one Sunday morning asked Cockburn where he was going to church, he answered, "Going to have a greet wi' Guthrie." The London Times declared, "We are almost inclined to rank him as the greatest living master of the pathetic."[2] Others have witnessed: ". . . he stirred every heart with strokes of pathos which nothing could resist";[3] "We have seen the tears trickle down the cheeks of grey-haired men, who knew nothing of religion . . .";[4] "It was Guthrie's intense capacity of feeling which made him the orator he was; he spoke not without tears. Mark, however, when Guthrie wept, his hearers wept too."[5]

To effect the deep emotions of his hearers simply for the enjoyment of exercising the actor's art would have been repugnant to him, for, as Cockburn again points out, "everything he does glows with a frank, gallant warm-heartedness, rendered more delightful by a boyish simplicity of air and style."[6] He declares quite frankly that he despised that which is artificial and unnatural: "Perhaps there is no fault

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1 A Sufficient Maintenance and an Efficient Ministry, p. 8.

2 September 28, 1860.

3 James Dodds, op. cit., p. 110.

4 John Smith, editor, op. cit., p. 347.

5 A.K.H. Boyd, quoted in the "Memoir" of Guthrie's The Parables, p. xiv. Dr. Alexander said Guthrie "preached fifty minutes, but they passed like nothing." Hall, op. cit., II, 267.

6 Henry Cockburn, op. cit., II, 174.

of speech or manner to be so much avoided as affectation; nor any place where it is more offensive than in the pulpit."[1] He delighted in listening to Wesleyan lay preachers, claiming that they had more real eloquence, because of their naturalness, than many a highly polished and educated minister. His advice was:

> So cultivate your voice as, with your action, to suit its intonation to the word; acquire such grace of manner as is seen in the movements of little children; throw off all constrained and awkward habits, either of speech or look, or action; in one word, be natural.[2]

The great masters of the pulpit, he suggested, should be studied, and their overall principles and methods used as suggestive guides. Guthrie himself admired and studied the preaching styles of Whitefield ("he moved vast congregations, as a field of corn is swayed by the wind"), Rowland Hill ("a preacher who threw his whole soul into his work"), Robert Hall ("this greatest of modern pulpit orators"), Isaac Barrow ("that great philosopher and divine") and Savonarola ("who, more, perhaps, than any other uninspired [sic] preacher ever did before, or has done since, Whitefield or Chalmers or Hall, . . . took possession of his hearers and moved their feelings"). Nevertheless, he cautioned, . . .

> . . . we should study fine models, but not to closely copy them. Nothing is gained by a slavish imitation. . . As God has given to every man his own manner, another man's manner will sit as awkwardly on us as his clothes would do.[3]

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1 "The Pulpit", Sunday Magazine, May 1, 1871.
2 Loc. cit.
3 Loc. cit.

His University elocution classes were also an aid in detecting and correcting many of his gestural defects. In his first sermon, so he recalled, "I did not know exactly what to do with my hands, and would have felt it to be a great relief if I could, consistently with decorum, have put them in my pockets!"[1] Ten years after preaching in Edinburgh, a witness thus described his gestures:

> His countenance kindles with an expression of earnest affection calculated to rivet your regard on him. There is nothing in his gesture, nothing in his speech at all attractive. His hand at first grasps the collar of his coat, he moves slowly backwards and fowards, leans at times over the pulpit . . . Attention is not arrested by the shaking of a white handkerchief, studied pauses and gestures, nor the flimsy attractions of common oratory. It is in the matter the attraction lies.[2]

In this same year (1847), however, Cockburn, who was considered a distinguished orator himself, expressed the opinion that ". . . his gesture, which seems as unthought-about as a child's, is the most graceful I have ever seen in any public speaker."[3]

It has been mentioned that Guthrie did not attract attention "by the shaking of a white handkerchief." As a matter of fact, one witness said that he "often indulged" in the habit of throwing out his handkerchief at full length, "and then, catching it as one might catch a ball, he would repeat the operation with a little touch of variety, . . . [but]

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1 Memoir, p. 222.
2 John Smith, editor, op. cit., pp. 343-44.
3 Henry Cockburn, op. cit., p. 174.

with such perfect naturalness and apparent lack of consciousness, that the action was entirely destitute of vulgarity."[1] This habit, mentioned only by this source, seems to have been his only pulpit eccentricity.

His gestures apparently carried intense dramatic realism, suiting the action with the thought expressed. For instance:

> There is a passage in The Gospel in Ezekiel descriptive of the battle between David and Goliath, and one who heard it delivered told me that when the speaker launched the stone from the stripling's sling every one seated in the balcony opposite the pulpit dodged his head to elude the missile![2]

The Reverend George Hay told of attending St. John's on one occasion when Guthrie . . .

> . . . described a shipwreck and the launching of a lifeboat to save the perishing crew in such vivid colours, that the dreadful scene appeared actually to take place before our eyes. Captain C_____, a young naval officer, who was sitting in a front seat of the gallery, was so electrified that he seemed to lose all consciousness of what was around him. I saw him spring to his feet, and begin to take off his coat, when his mother took hold of him and pulled him down. It was some time before he could realise where he was. He told me a few days after, in his mother's house, that he became oblivious to everything else; that the scene described appeared so real that he was entirely carried away, and rose to cast his coat and try to man the lifeboat.[3]

At the University he also studied the use of voice in

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1 A.J.S., op. cit., p. 106. Guthrie says that Garrick, the actor, after watching Whitefield's use of his handkerchief, said: "I'd give all the money of a benefit night, could I handle my handkerchief as that fellow does!" Was Guthrie a pupil of Whitefield in this? Sunday Magazine, May 1, 1871.

2 W.M. Taylor, op. cit., p. 264.

3 Memoir, p. 315. Other like incidents, Ibid., pp, 292.

public speaking:

> I learned to acquire a command over my voice so as to suit its force and emphasis to the sense, and to modulate it so as to express the feelings, whether of surprise, or grief, or indignation, or pity . . . Many have supposed that I owe any power I have of modulating my voice, and giving effect thereby to what I am delivering, to a musical ear. On the contrary, I am, as they say in Scotland, "timmer tuned" . . .[1]

Accounts invariably report that he had a "strong, mellow north country accent" which he made no attempt to conceal. "His language and accent are very Scotch," according to Cockburn, "but nothing can be less vulgar." "His accent was rather provincial," said another account, "but he modulated his voice with such skill and power that all defects vanished under the spell of his fervent oratory."[2] With no effort at all he could control the volume to that degree where at one moment he was speaking with "a voice like thunder," and the next with a "low and pathetic tone" which carried to the furthest reaches of the auditorium.

Guthrie never read a speech or sermon in his life, and he strongly urged all ministers to "throw away the paper." Chalmers (the only effective sermon-reader he knew) he blamed for the habit in Scottish pulpits, "but he is a great exception not to be followed." The only aid Guthrie allowed himself in the pulpit was, he said, "a piece of paper with the

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1 Memoir, p. 128.
2 James Dodds, op. cit., p. 113.

heads and such words written as mark the progress of the discourse and its prominent points."[1]

Criticisms of Thomas Guthrie's oratory are preponderantly and even effusively favorable--a few of them with mild reservations. One critic, at least, thought otherwise:

> [These are the] sensations with which we remember to have listened to his sermons; a mixture of admiration, amusement, and repugnance, such as perhaps no one but a popular preacher can excite to the same degree; now struck by a real bit of eloquence almost reaching genius, tears forced to our eyes in spite of ourselves, and the high thrill of sympathy expanding our hearts; now overwhelmed with pitifullest bathos, at which only propriety and a recollection of where we were prevented us from laughing; and again, sickened by some vulgar bit of bombast;--the preacher going on all the while in sublime unconsciousness of these variations, and to all appearance thinking the bombast the best. This curious power of saying occasional fine things, and being now and then moved by the higher poetic inspirations, while quite unconscious of it, and feeling a much greater personal relish for the surrounding clap-trap and bombast--is very bewildering to the philosophical observer; . . . how those occasional gleams of higher light should stream forth not only (as it seems) without intention on the part of the producer, but actually without any consciousness in his mind that he had done better than usual.[2]

Whatever judgement men may pass upon oratory in general, or upon his in particular, Guthrie himself was quite certain that pulpit eloquence in itself was less than nothing. "May God persuade you," he preached to his people, "none else can. In vain the orator here plies his arts. The Devil laughs at oratory. He stands in more fear of a poor saint on his

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1 Memoir, p. 509.
2 Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1874, pp. 461-62.

knees than of the greatest eloquence of the pulpit."[1] On another occasion he affirmed that . . .

> . . . though ornaments, polish, illustrations, eloquence in sermons may help the end in view, as feathers do the arrow's flight . . ., it is to the truth of God's Word, blessed by God's Spirit, that sinners owe their conversion, and saints their quickening and comfort in the house of God. . . Conversions being due not to the human talent but to the divine truths in the sermons, the greatest as well as the feeblest preachers have to say, . . . Unto thee, O Lord, be all the glory![2]

After one of his services, upon overhearing a lady refer to his sermon as a "charming discourse," Guthrie was heard to say quietly to an elder, "My preaching is a failure if I can only charm and not change!"[3]

But his charm was not without change. Many thousands of the poor had the gospel preached to them who may never otherwise have heard the Good News; many a destitute wretch was pulled from the mire of depraved poverty to have his feet set on the highway of Christian and respectable citizenship; many an ordinary listener had had his heart burn within him as this preacher talked with him by the way; many there were from the higher ranks of life who were constrained to give of their substance and influence as their reasonable service, "and they came to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

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1 The Way to Life, p. 95.
2. The Parables, pp. 223-24.
3 Quoted by O. Smeaton, op. cit., p. 16.

Indeed, anything else would have been entirely incongruous for a preacher such as the one who has formed the subject of this intensely interesting, provocative and rewarding study.

> A spirit so genial, so loving, so out-gushing, gifted with powers so remarkable--scattering on the right hand and on the left the most precious seed--could not fail, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, to produce the highest results of all--to conversion of men to God, and their transformation into the image of His Son. In hearts little dreamt of that seed has taken root, and sprung, and blossomed, and ripened into the richest fruit--and men we little think of will at the great day arise and call him blessed.[1]

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1 The Reverend George Philip in the Daily Review, p. 37.

EPILOGUE

CHAPTER V

EPILOGUE

It has been the purpose of this study to investigate the life and work of Thomas Guthrie in as full a manner as possible within the bounds of our subject. We have already considered the results of that study and the fulfillment of that purpose. Our work is completed. As far as we know, with two minor exceptions, we have read and considered every published work by Guthrie, and everything published by others which have made reference to him. The foregoing chapters are meant to represent that which these materials have had to say concerning our subject. What we shall say in this brief section, therefore, will be by way of a very broad summary.

When we first saw Guthrie's statue in Edinburgh's famous Princes Street, we wondered who this man, with his arm protectingly about a waif of a lad, could have been and why he was thus so conspicuously memorialized. We now feel that we know, that it is entirely appropriate that he is so remembered, and that Edinburgh and Scotland and Britain and the Church may be justly proud in claiming him as a particularly notable son. Something of "greatness" might be claimed for him in the field of Christian philanthropy, or in the area of pulpit oratory--and those who knew him best did not spare themselves in declaring his pre-eminence in both these--but

this study has left us with the conviction that, as another has expressed it, "The subtle union of many noble qualities, rather than the outstanding possession of any special one, made Guthrie what he was."[1]

There has been no attempt to study Guthrie as an ecclesiastic except in so far as was necessary to fill in the picture of the person and work that properly belongs to our subject. In this sphere, however, we believe a large and important place must be allotted to him for the unique work he did during the trying days of the Disruption upheaval.[2] His contemporaries give us to understand, whatever may be the conclusions of later historians, that he was second to none, Chalmers alone excepted, as the leader and informer of the people--and the Disruption was a popular movement. Also, we are left with the conclusion that he was far in advance of his times in his conception of the ecumenical Church. It distressed him sorely that Protestantism needs must express itself in so many denominations, and he was convinced that all Reformed churches held in common the great, central, fundamental truths which alone should form the criterion for their union. This being so, he could not but feel that the cries of those who opposed such a desired consummation were empty and unreasonable, an opposition which sprung more from the spirit

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1 O. Smeaton, op. cit., p. 145.
2 Supra, pp. 41-3, 160-66.

of Satan than the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The tenor of his personality and activities, not to mention his words, tells us that had his ministry been cast a century later, the halls of the present-day Church would often ring to the challenge of a united Church in a divided world. As Moderator he spoke to the General Assembly in words that today's Moderator might find timely: "Wheresoever we find Christ the Saviour worshipped in sincerity and in truth, let us welcome these worshippers as brethren in Christ."

Guthrie's name and fame will perhaps live longest as a Christian philanthropist. We have made it a practice to enquire of people met by chance in Edinburgh, and elsewhere in Scotland, whether or not they had heard of Thomas Guthrie. In most instances they had, and of those who had,most identified him as "the philanthropist". His Ragged Schools, which were the pride and joy of his life, still flourish in Edinburgh and in other cities. In Edinburgh, the two schools--one for boys and one for girls--are now officially called "Dr. Guthrie's Schools". We have had the privilege of spending the day in the boy's schools at Liberton where we found a modern plant operated under almost the exact system which was inaugurated by the founder more than one hundred years ago. A booklet was published on the occasion of the celebration of the schools' centenary, the twenty-four pages of which show how modern authorities in the field of education for juvenile

delinquents have begun to realize the maxims promulgated by Thomas Guthrie more than a century ago.[1]

The record of the number of benevolent enterprises with which he was actively associated is nothing short of amazing. But, as Candlish pointed out, he was no dreamy, idle and merely philosophical philanthropist like Sterne and Rousseau; rather he went down into the pit and dared to get his hands dirty, had the courage to practice what he preached, felt and saw and ministered to the festering wounds of society at the very point where those wounds were most foul and grievous. This first-hand experience gained for him a reputation of national importance as an authority in social problems: he was quoted in Parliament, asked to appear before Parliamentary Committees, gave evidence and supplied statistics to the Privy Council, launched numerous campaigns and institutions all over the country, and enlisted the help of the mighty and noble in work they had never dreamed of doing before. His work in the field of philanthropy was prodigious, that of Ragged Schools alone accounting for as much as most men could do as full-time work. We believe Thomas Guthrie's name and work will last for many more generations, and that his unique and highly personalized activities at a time when such work was painfully innovating will stand as a land mark

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1 Anne H. McAllister, The Centenary Celebration of Dr Guthrie's Schools for Boys and Girls (1947).

of the real dawn of Christian social consciousness which broke gloriously over Britain during his life-time. A periodical of his time looked down the years and said of him: "The records of national benevolence in future times shall not contain in their pages a more honourable name than that of Thomas Guthrie."[1] Sixty years later, Lord Balfour, in unveiling Guthrie's statue on Princes Street, said:

> Dr. Guthrie was . . . a practical philanthropist, a very apostle of social reform. He was in advance of his time, and notably in this respect perhaps that more than any other he realised sixty or seventy years ago the expediency of endeavouring to prevent rather than to wait for the result and cure it. It was he who endeavoured to stop the juvenile recruit to crime; who saw the necessity of better housing for the humbler classes, of endeavouring to interfere before destitution overtook them instead of leaving them to the tender mercies of the Poor Law of the day. He was an advocate of shorter hours of employment, for a reasonable amount of holidays, for temperance in those early days. But it was not so much these things as the spirit in which it was done--the spirit of true sympathy for those whom he regarded as his brothers and sisters.[2]

Our study of Guthrie's religious thought left us surprised and disappointed; surprised that one of his undiminishing and extreme popularity as a preacher for more than thirty years could command such attendance and attention with so little variety of matter preached; disappointed that he did not explore in more searching detail the doctrines that formed the frame-work of his message. The first few of his

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1 Hogg's Instructor, 1849, p. 402.
2 Quoted by R.L. Orr, op. cit., p. 269.

sermons are interesting and moving, but a continued study shows that they soon begin to weary because of excessive repetition of the essential content of each discourse. The reader gets to the point where, as he turns from one sermon to the next, by glancing at the title and text he knows in advance what the preacher is purposing to teach. The manner of presenting this reiterated matter, however, is ever varied and interesting. The "old, old story" is told over and over again but in ever-changing apparel, lighted and lifted up by a seemingly exhaustless series of illustrations, figures and images. When the reader passes these by, and reduces the message to its essentials, he is justifiably disappointed to find that he has nothing left but the hard core of the great doctrines with which he is already familiar. He wishes that the preacher had stopped to examine and amplify rather than to have been satisfied with a statement and illustration of the truth under consideration. Guthrie was in no sense of the term an interpreter of the inner life. Perhaps that is the reason he had so little to say about the Holy Spirit (though the Spirit is generously and importantly mentioned), the Sacraments, and the devotional nature of prayer and worship.

But Guthrie was by inclination and choice a herald of the Gospel. His own child-like faith, his flushed countenance and flashing eye, his utter sincerity and disarming naturalness, told with strokes of superb declamation where others

failed by the use of close logic and metaphysical speculation. As we have noticed, Guthrie addressed himself more to the heart than to the head--and he did so deliberately because he reasoned that there was the principle seat of man's religious nature. With a practical sagacity and cool deliberateness he set himself to detect what kind of preaching the people would attend to. After this secret was once learned, he just as tenaciously resolved to fit himself to meet the people where they were most vulnerable--no matter how other preachers did it or how it might have been done in the past. We have been astonished at the enormous work he did for the pulpit. If ministers today wonder how he drew such vast audiences, before declaring that people "just went to church in those days" or that times have changed, it might be revealing to enquire if modern preachers work as hard as he did to make the pulpit count for all it is worth. How many present-day preachers arise at five o'clock every morning in order to have three unbroken hours six days a week to give to sermon composition? How many today are as assiduous as he in studying and perfecting every detail of the homiletic art? Until we of today, with perhaps lesser natural gifts than his, labor as diligently and faithfully and with as consecrated urgency as he, then we cannot justifiably say that he would not or could not repeat in the twentieth century that which he performed so indisputably in the nineteenth. We believe he

could, that his was a type of personality, that his was a Gospel not bound to any particular age or place.

During this thesis we have been forced back time and again to speak of Guthrie's warm heart and sympathetic nature. We are persuaded that this is the seat and truth of his greatness. It would be possible for us, we believe, to name others who surpassed him as a preacher or as a philanthropist, though that would not be easy. But in sheer benignity, largeness and warmness of heart, loving-kindness and brotherly love, we have never met in print or out of it any person who surpassed him in this. And he was loved even as he loved, by all and sundry. The tearful Ragged School lad, one of thirty thousand people at Guthrie's funeral, who said, "He was all the father I ever knew," spoke eloquently for one class of society. After John Ruskin heard him preach and spoke with him afterwards, upon his return home he sent Guthrie his Stones of Venice "with the author's affectionate and respectful regards." Thinking this fly-leaf notation might appear presumptuous for such a short acquaintance, Ruskin, in a letter, said it gave him pause to write "affectionate", and continued, "yet I made up my mind at last to write what I felt, believing that you must be accustomed to people getting very seriously and truly attached to you, almost at first sight, and therefore would believe me."[1] That is the

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1 Memoir, p. 625.

Guthrie we have found in this research study, and have come to have not a little of that affection for him ourselves. We have found ourselves laughing aloud at some of his anecdotes, and we have also found ourselves moved even to tears as we felt with him some pathetic and pitiful scene that had moved his own great and tender heart.

But back of it all and through it all and in it all was the Christ whom he served with faithful devotion. We believe the following words by one who knew him well serves best to unlock the heart and life of Thomas Guthrie, preacher and philanthropist:

> The leading and most essential characteristic peculiarity of this great man is--that he was deeply, earnestly, intensely Christian. . . In his studies, his pursuits, his family--in his social habits, his warm-hearted friendships, his zealous philanthropy--in his pastoral labours, and his pulpit ministrations--in his work and in his life, love for "the Master" was the pervading, animating, sustaining power which upheld him.[1]

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1 A.J. Symington, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

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NOTE: This is the only complete bibliography of the published works of Thomas Guthrie. Two of his works, however, have eluded every effort to locate them. They are: A Word in Season, a temperance tract published in 1861, and Lost and Found, 1853, a work about which nothing is known. Every work listed herein has been consulted and used in this thesis; no attempt has been made to give and list all works which might have some bearing on the subject covered by this thesis.

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